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THE NEBRASKA ENGLISH CURRICULUM FOR GRADE FIVE CONTINUES THE PRESENTATION OF LITERARY TECHNIQUES USED TO PRODUCE WORKS OF IMAGINATION. IN "TALL TALE AMERICAN," RAPUNZEL," AND OTHER FAIRY TALES, THE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN FOLK TRADITIONS ARE COMPARED FOR COMMON STYLISTIC AND STRUCTURAL DEVICES. A MORE COMPLEX USE OF TECHNIQUES USED IN FANCIFUL STORIES IS SEEN IN THE FAIRY TALES OF C.S. LEWIS AND HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AND IN "THE BIDPAI FABLES" AND "JATAKA TALES" FROM INDIA. "THE DOOR IN THE WALL" PROVIDES AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SYMBOLISM. BUILDING UPON PREVIOUS GRADE-LEVEL UNITS, THE READING OF FIVE GREEK MYTHS FURTHERS STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF MYTHIC THOUGHT AND PATTERNS, AND "THE MERRY ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD" PREPARES CHILDREN FOR A LATER STUDY OF EPIC FORM. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBJECT MATTER AND THEME IS SEEN IN "KING OF THE WIND" AND "THE ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS." "CHILDREN OF THE COVERED WAGON" AND "THIS DEAR BOUGHT LAND" ENHANCE CHILDREN'S AWARENESS OF THEIR HISTORICAL HERITAGE. IN ADDITION, "DR. GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER, SCIENTIST" IS READ TO STUDY A LITERARY TYPE AND TO ENABLE STUDENTS TO ASSESS THE PERSONAL QUALITIES OF A CHARACTER IN LITERATURE. THIS MANUAL IS AVAILABLE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS, 215 NEBRASKA HALL, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68508. (SEE ALSO TE 000 048, TE 000 054, AND TE 000 055.) (JB)

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Grade 5

Units 45-57

TE000 052

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Grade 5

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS · LINCOLN

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PREFACE

The version of A Curriculum for English published here is an extension of the suggestions made in the Woods Curriculum Workshop of 1961; it is the result of a peculiarly close collaboration between Nebraska classroom teachers and scholars from Nebraska and the country at large--a collaboration particularly intense between 1961 and 1964. The curriculum covers the years of kindergarten through high school in detail and makes suggestions for the first year of college. It is not a panacea for present problems in the teaching of English; it is more like a half formed slave struggling to free itself from the stone. In some cases, the materials represent the state of the art in 1961; in some cases, that of 1967; many of the materials are as incomplete, as imperfect or simplistic as the group which created them. They are offered to remind their audience that scholars can concern themselves with schools and that teachers can fulfill the demands of scholarship; they are also offered for whatever use they may have in the classroom. Since hundreds of people collaborated in the creation of these materials, no names are attached to them. They should remain anonymous and peregrine.

The Nebraska Curriculum
Development Center

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INTRODUCTION TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Nebraska elementary program is divided into units; the units center in the study of literature, often literature read aloud, and include work in language and composition integral to such study. It may be in order to describe the premises of the program.

I. Premises of the Program

For at least twenty centuries, the best literature produced in the western world was presented orally to audiences of many ages and social levels. And if it is true that great audiences produce great artists, then the audiences of such literature must have penetrated its meaning and been sensitive to its literary merit; there must have been some route of interchange of inspiration continually open between writers and audiences. From this it does not follow that children who as yet do not read should be insensible to the attractions of fine literature when it is appropriate to their level of intellect, imagination and rhythmic sense. Before a child is able to read, before he is able to cope with the only partially systematic English graphemic system, he has the need to come in contact with literature: if he cannot read, he can surely be read to--and this is a basic notion of the early units in this curriculum.

We should surprise few teachers in saying that children can tell stories, oral tales, cycles of tales; they can create their own literary culture so to speak, and they perhaps can do this best at the prompting and inspiration of excellent literary works. Storytelling, modeled and unmodeled, is thus a foundation activity suggested in this curriculum. The child's basically oral approach to literature will change as he masters reading skills, but he must know and feel that these reading skills are worth learning.

The elementary school program for language, literature and composition should not be confused with a reading program. It is neither such a program nor a substitute for such a program. The development of methods for the teaching of reading is the proper concern of the reading expert and not of this study. Further linguistic research may lead to improvements in methods for the teaching of reading; and, when sufficient research data indicates that these improvements have been made, they should be synthesized in this curriculum. Our concern is with showing such literature as will make reading worth the effort, composition an exercise in the imitation of excellence, and language study more than a bore.

The language, literature and composition program for the elementary school is designed to teach students (1) to comprehend the more frequent oral and written conventions of literature composed for young children--formal or generic conventions or simple rhetorical conventions; (2) to control these linguistic and literary conventions in their own writing; and (3) to comprehend consciously the more frequent grammatical conventions which they can handle in their speaking and writing.

One who plans an elementary curriculum must first identify the basic generalizations of the discipline, second, represent these generalizations so that they can be taught to children, and third, build a spiral curriculum which covers those basic concepts in ever greater depth, thus developing a progressively more sophisticated understanding of them. Once introduced in a relatively simple fashion, a concept will be treated somewhat more intensively each time it appears. All in all, the units of the curriculum intend to expose the student repeatedly to facts and ideas that he may use in order to proceed inductively to general conclusions about the conventions of good literature.

The child's sense of logic develops from an intuitive, anthropomorphic apprehension to the more analytical apprehension of the junior high school student. The curriculum's sequence of literary works and of suggested analogous compositions endeavors to display the same progress from the "mythic" and anthropomorphic to the realistic and the analytic, although this does not imply that the program at its upper levels ignores "fabulous" literature and comparable compositional forms. (The basic attitudes toward the psychology of children's literature, its relation to cognition, and the place of its emergence in psychology upon which this curriculum is based are set forth in the following books: Philippe Aries, L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien regime; Jan Van Den Berg, "Adults and Children," in The Changing Nature of Man: Northrup Frye, Design for Learning, [a modification of the generic theory used in this program].

II. The Units

The materials for the curriculum program in the elementary school consist of seventy specific units for the various grade levels plus two packets of ancillary materials: Poetry for the Elementary Grade and Language Explorations for the Elementary Grades. The units suggested for the elementary level endeavor to arrange literary works in an articulated sequence designed to develop the concepts essential to the literature program in the spiral fashion mentioned above. Sixty-nine of the units are divided into nine groups or "pseudo-genres":[1]

folk tales
fanciful stories
animal stories
adventure stories
myth
fable
other lands and people
historical fiction
biography

Some of the selections in the curriculum could obviously be placed in more than one group, but such a classification serves the purposes of the curriculum in that it allows for stress on certain elements of stories, which in turn allows the sequential development of the principles of the program. The stories have not for the most part been selected because they "fit" into one of the nine categories; rather, the committees have first selected literary works of substantial merit and then fitted categories to serve the purposes of the program most conveniently.

During a 1963 summer worshop supported by the Woods Foundation, the entire elementary program was revised and new units were developed, following a consistent format adopted during the process of revision. Some explanation of each section of the revised units may be helpful.

(1) Core Text

From the versions of stories or the editions of books recommended as core selections for each unit, the committees of teachers who worked on the Nebraska project have selected those versions or editions which they feel have the most usefulness to the program or the highest degree of literary integrity. It is not absolutely essential that the teacher always use the version or edition recommended, but she should make sure that any version used will be entirely suitable to the objectives of the unit. Core selections which are short and difficult to obtain are occasionally reprinted in the packets.

(2) Alternate Selections

Most packets list suitable substitutes for the core selections, should the teacher not be able to obtain or for any reason not wish to use the core selection. These alternates may be treated in much the same fashion as that suggested for the core selection: they will afford the teacher variety in materials as she teaches the program over a period of years. The alternate selections may also remind the teacher that she is strongly urged to develop her own units when she discovers other materials suitable to the program.

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[1] The other unit of the seventy is recommended for the sixth grade level and discusses the poetry of Robert Frost.

(3) General Introduction

This section of each unit outlines the major objectives of the unit, discusses the "genre" of the works presented, and outlines the relationship between the unit in question and other units in the curriculum.

The articulation of the units in the program is extremely important: it gives the teacher of one grade some idea of what her students have done previously and what they will be expected to do later. It may save her from resorting to drills that will "teach her students to handle the language properly," in a vain attempt to cover every area of English in one grade.

The units which are suggested in the literature and composition program are not necessarily to be used at a particular grade level. They are sliding units: that is, the grade levels are suggested only. In dealing with the better students, the teacher may wish to cover both the first and second grade packets by the end of the child's first year in school. Again, in dealing with the slower students, the teacher may not cover more than the first half of the first grade units. The interests and abilities of the class will dictate the most suitable rate of presentation as well as the order of the units within a grade level packet. Sometimes it is mentioned that one unit should be taught before or after some other unit in the same grade level, but for the most part the order during any one year is left entirely to the teacher.

It is important, however, that the program follow the general sequence established within each classification. Within each "vertical" series of units (all the units on "folk tales," on "fanciful stories," on myth, fable, etc.) there is a definite progression from the first grade through the sixth grade units in the complexity of concepts presented. The charts on pages following show how these vertical sequences work, and how the progression from grade to grade is accomplished.

For instance, the "fable" units in the first two grades introduce the child to the common devices and patterns of the simplest fables. The literary purposes of those devices and patterns are exhibited by stories in the third grade unit. The fourth grade "fable" unit and the fifth grade unit on the fables of ancient India offer a more intensive, more analytical study of the classical fable form; the series culminates in the sixth grade study of Kenneth Grahame's _The Wind in the Willows_: the "epic" fable in a humorous, satiric, allegorical representation of the steady and the gross in modern society.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNITS

Grade	FOLK	FANCIFUL	ANIMAL	ADVENTURE
1	Little Red Hen Three Billy Goats Gruff The Gingerbread Boy	Little Black Sambo Peter Rabbit Where the Wild Things Are	Millions of Cats The Elephant's Child How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin Ferdinand	Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain The Little Island
2	Little Red Riding Hood Story of the Three Pigs Story of the Three Bears	And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street	Blaze and the Forest Fire How Whale Got His Throat The Beginning of the Armadillos The Cat That Walked by Himself	The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins The Bears on Hemlock Mountain
3	Sleeping Beauty Cinderella or the Little Glass Slipper Mother Holle	The Five Chinese Brothers Madeline Madeline's Rescue	The Blind Colt How the Camel Got His Hump How the Leopard Got His Spots The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo	Winnie-the-Pooh Mr. Popper's Penguins
4	Febold Feboldson	Charlotte's Web	Brighty of the Grand Canyon	Homer Price
5	Tall Tale America Rapunzel The Woodcutter's Child The Three Languages	The Snow Queen The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe	King of the Wind	The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood Island of the Blue Dolphins
6	The Seven Voyages of Sinbad	Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass A Wrinkle in Time	Big Red	The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNITS - Continued

Grade	MYTH	FABLE	OTHER LANDS AND PEOPLE	HISTORICAL FICTION	BIOGRAPHY
1	The Story of the First Butterflies The Story of the First Woodpecker	The Dog and the Shadow The Town Mouse and The Country Mouse	A Pair of Red Clogs		They Were Strong and Good George Washington
2	The Golden Touch	The Hare and the Tortoise The Ant and the Grasshopper	Crow Boy	Caroline and Her Kettle Named Maud	Ride on the Wind
3	Daedalus and Icarus Clytie Narcissus	Chanticleer and the Fox The Musicians of Bremen	The Red Balloon	The Courage of Sarah Noble	Christopher Columbus and His Brothers
4	Hiawatha's Fasting Theseus and the Minotaur Arachne Phaeton and the Chariot of The Sun	Jacobs: The Fables of Aesop	A Brother for the Orphelines	Little House on the Prairie The Matchlock Gun	Willa Leif the Lucky
5	Ceres and Prosperine Atalanta's Race Jason The Labors of Hercules	Bidpai Fables Jataka Tales	The Door in the Wall	Children of the Covered Wagon This Dear Bought Land	Dr. George Washington Carver, Scientist
6	The Children of Odin The Hobbit	The Wind in the Willows	Hans Brinker Secret of the Andes	The Book of King Arthur and his Noble Knights	Cartier Sails the St. Lawrence

CORRELATIVE UNITS: "You Come Too" - Poetry of Robert Frost - Grade 6; Poetry for the Elementary Grades; Language Explorations for Elementary Grades.

Insofar as fables usually treat of animals acting with human characteristics, the fourth grade unit on fables is related to all the elementary units containing stories about animals. As the study of a form which characteristically uses the oblique perspectives of satire, symbolism, and allegory, the series on the fable points to many other units concerned with other levels of meaning and with simple symbolism (for example, the Grade 5 unit, The Door in the Wall). Besides coordinating with other elementary units in an informal investigation of literary forms, expressions, and meanings, this fourth grade "fable" unit helps to form an important foundation for more analytical secondary units: units which take up the satiric use of the fable (ninth and twelfth grade units on satire); units which take up more sophisticated Greek literature (seventh grade unit on the classical myth, ninth grade unit on the epic, and tenth grade unit on tragedy); and units which take up techniques for attacking secondary levels of meaning (Grade 7 units, The Making of Stories and The Meaning of Stories).

Insofar as the fourth grade unit studies stories which express Greek moral idealism, it relates to the entire curriculum's consideration of literature as a vehicle for expressing the corruption of the nature of the good life and for expressing imaginatively the essential moral and ethical precepts and assumptions of our culture.

Again, the sequence of units on the folk tale, beginning with the first grade, presents familiar folk tales selected from a great variety of cultures and recorded in a great variety of modes; these works share characteristics stemming from their common origin in the body of oral folk traditions. The first grade unit concentrates on the oral and repetitive features of the folk tale; the second grade unit exhibits common plot patterns in a series of stories; and the third grade unit introduces the student to the magical world of fairy-land and reviews the common structural motifs of folk literature; the fourth grade unit and one fifth grade unit examines the tall tale, the most typical form of American folk literature. The other fifth grade unit on folk tales builds upon the knowledge of all those units to begin an investigation of the symbolic and allegorical meanings that the devices common to all folk literature tend to express. The stories become more rewarding as they become more complex.

(4) Background information for the teacher

This section discusses stylistic characteristics of the works, their structure, motif, theme, and the author and his style. Not every topic is included in every unit--for instance, a discussion of the author is not always pertinent or possible.

Note: The material included in this section of each unit, as well as that in the General Introduction, is for the teacher: it is not intended to be communicated directly to students at the elementary level. These materials are provided on the assumption that a teacher will teach more effectively if she understands something of the literary nature of stories and of their place in the curriculum. The teacher should know all that she can about the meaning and literary method of the work so that, whenever and wherever she can, she may bring to the students those insights that she has and, more importantly, so that she can encourage her students when they show evidence of gaining insights themselves.

> *But* the teacher should not deliver lectures and ready-made literary analyses to elementary school children. She should not deliver the background material in the units to students but lead them when and as they can to perceive what a work is about. She should not ask children to recognize and apply the technical critical terminology of the interpretive analyses given in these sections of the units: the primary purpose of the curriculum is to create understanding, not conventional bourgeois citizens or polite little boys, however desirable the creation of these may be.

Presumably the children will enjoy the stories; they will gain some initial bits of evidence for an eventual inductive recognition of the nature of some kinds of literature; and the patterns of the stories will furnish them with some preliminary tools for their own attempts to organize their own experiences into forms that others can understand and enjoy.[1]

(5) Suggested procedures

In planning with the literature units, the teacher must remember that the most important single facet of the program is the child's experience with the literature itself. Even as the poet endeavors to establish his relationship to his audience, so the teacher should seek to establish rapport with her audience before she begins to read to the children. The teacher who reads should be familiar with her story whether she reads it or tells it. She should know the rhythms of the sentences, the rhythm of the plot. She should have practiced the story so that she can read it through with a sense of the music of its language and meaning. If the book is illustrated, she should know when to show pictures and when not to show pictures. If the child reads a story or a creative composition to the class, he should have an opportunity to prepare himself for the reading. He, too, should have an opportunity to establish his rapport with the class. The reading of good literature to children or the reading of good literature by children should not be regarded as a reward for good behavior or something to do if the class has time; it should constitute a basic part of the school curriculum.

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[1] The editors should like her to acknowledge their indebtedness during the preparation of these introductory essays to two of the most prominent books on children's literature, May Hill Arbuthnot's *Children and Books* and Huck and Young's *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*. Every elementary teacher should have these two standard works on her personal bookshelf. She also might see "Analyzing Literature in the Elementary Institute," an article by Paul A. Olson and Ned S. Hedges in *Source Book on English Institutes for Elementary Teachers* (published by MLA-NCTE, 1965) for notes on techniques and sample analyses.

The fact that the suggested procedures are divided into various sections--literature, composition, language exploration, extended activities--should not lure the teacher into believing that these activities are separate and unconnected. These divisions are made purely for the sake of convenience and uniformity in the organization of the units. The composition and language activities must grow _directly_ out of the child's experience with the literature; the teacher should seize upon opportunities to unify activities and literature presentation. It is a basic premise of this curriculum that probably the best basis for building a child's competence in composition and his understanding of the nature and possibilities of his native language is an exposure to literature of superior quality over a relatively long period of time. The composition section rarely makes a distinction between oral and written composition exercises; this decision is left to the teacher on the basis of the abilities, interest, and readiness of her students.

(6) Poetry

Two "core" poetry texts are recommended for the elementary program: May Hill Arbuthnot's _Time for Poetry_ and _The Golden Treasury of Poetry_, edited by Louis Untermeyer. In each of the units, related poems are suggested for study in connection with the units. If the poem recommended appears in one of these two "core" books, its title and author are listed. Poems for Grades K-6, along with suggestions for the teaching of poetry in the elementary school, are combined in the ancillary packet _Poetry for the Elementary Grades_.

(7) Bibliography

The study of the core book should not end the unit. If the student has properly mastered the concepts which the core book is intended to communicate, he should be ready to go on to read further works. The works suggested in the bibliography of the literature units vary in difficulty and in appeal to children, but each is related to the central matter studied in the unit. It is better for the teacher to overestimate the reading ability of the child than to underestimate it when she selects individualized readings which cluster about the core readings. The units presume that the teacher has made a careful effort to take an inventory of the child's literary interests to discover what books he reads, what books are read to him at home, what kinds of television programs he sees--in short, the kinds of entertainment which nourish him. A teacher who knows such things and knows them well may be better able to supply appropriate works for individual student reading.

III. Literature

A. The Child's World and Children's Literature:

It may be useful for us to set forth our conceptions of the history and purpose of children's literature.

Children's literature as a species of literature addressed exclusively to an audience of children would seem to have appeared fairly recently, emerging as a significant species only in the eighteenth century. Recent historians of childhood relate both the appearance and the distinguishing features of children's literature to changes which have occurred in the social pattern of western life--to changes in the idea of ideal childhood and ideal family pattern as these relate to general community patterns. As adult life became more complex in its technology and more remote from the life of the child, a separate species of literature appeared, setting forth the myths of childhood as opposed to the myths of adulthood. Whereas sixteenth century books for children are generally didactic books about the adult roles of a craftsman or a gentleman, or religious books which speak rather frankly of sex, death, and the meaning of life, the eighteenth century begins to produce a distinctive children's literature. The evidence available to us suggests that children in earlier times who read fiction at all read easy adult works--romances and fables--which were not censored to protect the "delicacy" of the child. The change from uncensored adult literature for children to a literature written specifically for a child audience appears rather obviously in The Perrault Mother Goose (1724). While the Perrault book contains such one time folktales as "Little Red Riding-Hood," "Tom Thumb," and "Blue Beard," the language of the tales is adapted to make them appropriate to a children's audience; they already display the special aesthetic features which mark children's literature--the aesthetic distance, the broad strokes and colors, the use of incremental repetition, the symmetrical episodic plot, and so forth. The sexual detail remains rather more frank than contemporary taste would dictate for children's books and the moral symbolism rather more obviously pointed by a moral.

Today's child reads a literature radically different from adult literature partly because he lives in a world radically separated from the adult world. At the pre-school or early school level he tends, as Piaget has shown, to see "nature" immediately before him and to relate its events to anthropomorphic personal or semipersonal forces rather than to an impersonal causal continuum. Technological specialization has destroyed the world of open shops through which the medieval-Renaissance child wandered, of benches where he took his place beside his father to learn his trade, and has replaced it with a professional-industrial world where adult roles are neither public nor obvious. New urban industrial social patterns generally protect the American child from basic adult experiences of sexuality, war, and death. Concomitantly, the child's literature portrays generally a nonnaturalistic, nonscientific physical world which may have more in common with that of the Greek myth-maker than with that of the contemporary adult. It deals with those roles in human society which are publicly and easily understood--often those symbolized by special apparel--the roles of peasant and king, of firemen, trainman, carpenter, and shipman. Death and sex are either not presented at all or presented in flattened form: the wolf "eats up" Little Red Riding-Hood at no pain to her, the Prince's romance with Rapunzel is a rescue and a ride. Modern versions of "Red Riding-Hood" soften the ending even further, allowing the woodsman to find her cowering in the kitchen instead of in the wolf's belly. As adult social relations in the public world become more complex, the central social group in most literature that is attractive to children (aside from fable and myth) comes to be the family. Beyond the family group in modern children's literature, the world is distorted, comic, or even mysterious, dark, fearful, and wildly grotesque. (Conrad may have exaggerated slightly, but only slightly, when in writing about Galsworthy's Forsyte Saga, he said that all fairy and folk literature is essentially about the home.) To the degree that children do not understand the deeper, more complex motives and considerations which govern adult behavior, their literature presents flat characters. In its treatment of nature, of social roles and social life, of inner drives and inner psychological life, children's literature is set at some distance from adult ways of conceiving--not necessarily at equal distance from children's ways. Perhaps anachronistically the literature which most appeals to children is often called fanciful, surrealistic, mythic, improbable (anachronistically because probability is relative to the experience which measures it). In any case, teachers of children's literature could well consider how and why children's literature is different, how it sees things in a different slant of light from adult literature, particularly from so-called naturalistic or realistic adult literature which is more or less illusionistic or more or less an exploration of adult psychology.

B. The sense of form and plot:

If, in its treatment of nature, society, and the human personality, children's literature differs from modern adult literature, it also differs in aesthetic or style at the level of the organization of sentences and larger units. The characteristic aesthetic devices of the children's story (the episodic plot, the quick action with a sudden ending, the emphasis on rhythmic excitement, onomatopoeia, repetitive oral formulae, etc.) appear to appeal to senses of rhythm and form which are basic in the child and almost innate. So also do the common plot patterns.

The units of the curriculum repeatedly present variations of the four structural motifs of children's literature which are related to the sense of family and "other-than-family": (1) a small person's journey from home to isolation away from home; (2) a small person's or a hero's journey from home to a confrontation with a monster; (3) a helpless figure's rescue from a harsh home and the miraculous creation of a secure home; and (4) a conflict between a wise beast and a foolish beast. The family unit and the home are described as ultimately good, even if, as in (3) above, it may not be so originally for a small hero. That terrors lurk outside the home in many stories--wolves, tigers, the "dread of the forest"--may reflect the mystery of the technologically-oriented outside world for the child.

Various forms of the four basic plot patterns, appearing in many works throughout the program, should give the students some of the "form consciousness" which Mr. James Squire has indicated to be basic to reading and to composition. Rather than over-emphasize similarities among stories, a teacher should help students to see how a single plot type can be the vehicle of many different meanings; in short, she should point out similarities in order that the children recognize the differences in meaning and content.

* * *

All children's books do not "mean" the same thing. Stories which deal with the child leaving home may all dramatize much the same familial values, but the evils which each child encounters are usually quite different, and suggest a different meaning with each story. Peter Rabbit, Bartholomew Cubbins, and Little Red Riding-Hood all come from good homes, but Peter Rabbit meets the monstrous Mr. McGregor because he is imprudent; Bartholomew meets the monstrous king and the monstrous executioner because the social system in which he lives is unjust and silly; and Little Red Riding-Hood is destroyed simply because she is too little to make the discriminations needed before one is to venture beyond the home. The monsters encountered by the children in Little House on the Prairie are monsters which actually confronted the pioneers: natural disaster, snow, drought, Indians; the monsters which Pecos Bill encounters are similar frontier monsters, but presented in a different fictional mode, in an exaggerated heroic form. In the case of stories which begin in a harsh home, the fairy godmother who comes to rescue Cinderella is only a substitute parent; the guardian angel who comes to rescue the child in the "Woodcutter's Child" is more than this, for she is a kind of picture of conscience, of those things which remind us of our innocence and of our guilt.[1]

To accede to the above analysis of children's fiction may not be to teach it differently, except as a study of children's fiction from this perspective may bring a teacher to try more seriously to visualize what a specific child may see in a specific piece of fiction. The children's literature program of the Nebraska Curriculum Development Center, however, is organized not to pass over the peculiar features of children's literature but to place them in a heightened light so that, for instance, a single unit will contain nothing but stories in which nature takes on a mythic life and force or in which a child or miniscule figure journeys away from home to encounter a monster. The children are never asked to interpret a story directly; they certainly are not invited to become symbol mongers; the interpretation which they do, they do by picturing stages in the action of a story, dramatizing it. After they have a fairly good sense of the resources of a narrative mode, they write, in the mode of the story, a work of their own. What this method may do is to give children a scaffolding for the writing of rather longer compositions than would conventionally appear in their writing. It may also give them an opportunity to exploit, for their own purposes, the conceptual "gestalts," the rhythmic and aesthetic devices, of a body of art which answers to their peculiar understandings.

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[1] Hence a teacher may properly be concerned with what may be spoken of as a "moral" or "philosophic" comment of a work for children--if one understands these words in a sense which is not too heavy handed. For instance, in works for children, the good person is usually beautiful and the wicked person, ugly: a technique which does not suggest that goodness makes one beautiful or that wickedness makes one ugly but which uses beauty as a symbol for goodness and ugliness for wickedness. The action of ugly and beautiful people frequently establish the moral polarity of the work. Thus, good people in children's works are often portrayed as capable, through their goodness, of transforming the society about them (for instance in Cinderella or Little Tim), and the good are usually pictured as transparent and honest: what lies on the surface is one with what is within; on the other hand, evil and ugly people are full of mere complexity--as conniving, rationalistic, designing, subtle, and utterly closed sensibilities.

IV. Composition[1]

The program in composition tries to give the elementary student:

(1) a sense of the expressive possibilities of the sound of language;
(2) a capacity to manipulate syntactic patterns and to choose the "most desirable" syntactic pattern;
(3) a capacity to manipulate simple rhetorical devices (metaphor, simile, etc.) and a simple understanding of how consideration of the relation between speaker and audience affects one's handling of oral and written language; and
(4) a capacity to write in fictional modes analogous to those studied in literature readings and to add more analytic modes of writing to these very gradually.

In its portrayal of a moral universe children's literature does not always suggest the tragic sense that virtue and reward are not one, that both sorrow and lifegiving rain fall on the just and the unjust alike. The rewards of virtue in children's literature are granted from above almost, and they are both spiritual and physical. Cinderella receives the reward of the prince and happiness; Little Tim, a secure return to his home and success in school. On the other hand, the designing, secretive, and complex are not destroyed from above but destroy themselves--or somehow shed their wickedness; and their cruelty and wickedness almost never originates in the child's group but in the adult group--with the stepmother, with the unknown man who persecutes the black stallion; with *large* monsters whose actions are inexplicable; with the military stoats and weasels who take over Toad Hall. Thus, there is a sense of a kind of "granting" in the rewarding of good and of "earning" in the rewarding of evil--the sense of a world fated to be perfect.

[1] The treatment of two important topics, Composition and Language, is here necessarily brief. The teacher should also see the manuals for elementary teachers which are written expressly on these subjects.

A significant part of the Nebraska Curriculum Program is its provision for a wide variety of creative composition based directly upon literary study; the purpose of having children do creative composition is to get them to represent their own thoughts, their own fictions, and their own values in their own language, both oral and written. It is to give them a sense of the music of language, a sense that they can master that music. It is to give them a sense that they know forms of literature and can communicate through those forms. Children can learn to control a wide variety of the grammatical and lexical resources of the language in their compositions and a wide variety of the symbolic and representational resources offered by the literary forms if they are offered a sequence of literary models and invited to do model writing based on the sequence. The models offered for student emulation may represent syntactic, rhetorical, or literary forms.

It should be possible to display stories so as to give children a sense of their patterns and so as to allow children to create stories of their own which express their conceptions of the nature and meaning of things. It should be possible to allow children to make up narrative cycles around such patterns. It may be possible to give them visual models which show, for instance, the secure home, the monster, the rescue from the monster, and to ask them to compose stories concerning the visual models which are offered to them. Children at this level are perhaps more ready to handle fictional modes of communication than they are to handle direct modes of communication. This does not mean that their writing is second-hand writing. It means that they have mastered the conventions of communication of a literature which is properly theirs.

Children should first see what the language can do at its best, and they should then be given an opportunity to try for the best that they can do; children should not be so constantly reminded of mistakes that they come to feel they do not know the language and cannot become native speakers in the fullest sense of the word. Instead they should be led to the difference between the oral and written language and realize that they must include certain signals in their written language which are not necessary in the spoken language. They should understand that the thought of any writing is important, important enough to require the signals which will make that thought accessible to others. If the red pencil is to be used at all, it is perhaps better used to mark passages in student writing which are especially good. When the teacher corrects what the student has done, she might well say to the student, "I like this very much. Do you think that you might -----? You have a good idea here. How can we make it clear?" etc. As a substitute for the correction of compositions, the teacher might have students get together in small groups, read their compositions to each other, and make suggestions. Finally, the teacher who reads the child's composition to the class should never do so without the child's permission. If the child is asked to read the composition before the class, he should be allowed time to prepare for the reading, so that he can read with poise and fluency. At the earlier levels where a child cannot write down his own compositions, the teacher may wish to serve as a scribe, taking down the stories and observations which the children make. The language which the child uses should be altered as little as possible; it does not help a child to compose if the teacher in part makes up his composition.

To suggest that the punitive correction of a child's theme is not particularly efficacious is not to suggest that the teacher make no analysis. She should analyze carefully the usage levels which the child exhibits, the syntactic patterns which he uses, the logical processes which he appears to be developing, the narrative patterns which predominate in his stories. Such analysis should become, like the results of I.Q. tests and achievement tests, part of the teacher's background on a child. The analysis should permit the teacher to introduce the child to reading which will sharpen his sense of the possibilities of language in the areas where he is deficient or give him new insights into what he can do with narrative or expository prose. The analysis may give the teacher some understanding of the kinds of linguistic exercise which she should give to the children to give them a sense of the broad resources of the language.

V. Language

The materials for language study in the elementary school program consist of (1) a "language explorations" section in the part of each unit devoted to suggested procedures; (2) a separate resource packet, Language Explorations for Elementary Grades, containing a brief introduction to modern language study, a statement of the objectives of language study at each level, and a great number of linguistic games and activities useful in elementary school classrooms.

The whole of the language program for the elementary school is directed toward a few rather clear-cut goals. It is directed

(1) toward displaying to children that English is primarily a word-order language, that the structure of English syntax is often of the utmost importance;
(2) toward giving children an understanding of the sound (phonology) of the language, its music;
(3) toward giving them an understanding of the language's historical dimensions (where our vocabulary came from, (etc.) and of the evolution of its spelling system, understandings so important not only to spelling, but to reading; and

(4) toward giving them an understanding of the extent to which punctuation is a written representation of the supra-segmental features of spoken discourse.

The taxonomic study of language, like the analytic study of literature, depends on logical skills which are not sufficiently fully developed in the elementary school child to make the formal study of linguistics feasible at this level. Yet the study of phonology, morphology, and syntax, as well as of the history of the language and its dialects, does have some place in the elementary school; it can serve first as a preparation for a later formal junior high school study of linguistics and second as a device for freeing students and teachers from prescriptive attitudes toward language, attitudes which are likely to inhibit their flexibility in handling syntax and vocabulary. Since the child ordinarily enters school with a full intuitive grasp of the sound, morphology, and syntactic repertory of the language, he may appropriately be exposed to a language and literature program which will conform to and strengthen this grasp. Until the child has a good control of basic reading skills, the program must perforce be an oral one; even after the student controls the basic reading skills, however, a large part of the program may properly continue to be oral since such oral exposure to literature may quicken his ear to the "tunes" of language, sharpen his sense of syntax, and continue to widen his oral vocabulary.

VI. Conclusion

The elementary units do not make heavy demands on the overt analytical capacities of students: The stories exemplify important principles of literary form, and teach them without much suggestion that the student talk about the underlying formal principles. At the primary level, it may be both easier and more profitable for the student to perceive the principle by encountering the work than by talking about it. Intellectualizing which is prematurely forced upon students may degenerate into mere manipulation of jargon. Similarly, the generalizations describing the structure of our language, or the generalizations describing the structures of discourses can probably be embodied in explorations and activities appropriate to elementary children long before the children are able to discuss or write about them.

Although these ideas should not be discussed or written about in the elementary classroom, they can be taught to some level of the students' understanding, and taught in such a way that secondary school teachers can build on them. The elementary school teacher need not, indeed should not, lecture about the concept of the hero predominant in Ancient Greece; she should realize that an imaginative teaching of the story of the girl who goes out to meet the wolf may prepare students for a more receptive reading of the story of the hero who goes out to meet the dragon. While the two stories do not "mean" the same thing or belong to the same genre, they do, in part, share something of the same form; thus a student who has been introduced sensibly, step by step, to elementary school stories in which a central character goes away alone from his home or his homeland to face its enemies will be better prepared to handle the communication of this particular narrative convention in more sophisticated Greek literature. Again, the child who has been allowed to create an oral-aural "literary culture" in his own primary classroom probably is likely better to understand how such cultures work when he studies the *Odyssey* or *Beowulf*.

One may say that the literature program moves from the world of children's literature in two directions: first, in the direction of heroic and mythical literature; and, second, in the direction of realistic literature. The less fully developed characters of children's literature are replaced by the subtle and carefully analyzed characters of the realistic novel. The fairy tale which ends, "and so they lived happily ever after" is replaced by the comedy; the adventure story, by the epic; the simple fable by such satiric fables as *Animal Farm* and *Gulliver's Travels*. *Huckleberry Finn* follows *Tom Sawyer*; *The Tale of Two Cities* follows *Children of the Covered Wagon*; the *Biography of Samuel Johnson* follows *Willa*.

In the area of linguistics, the linguistic explorations of the elementary school are replaced by the systematic study of the language proposed for the junior high school. In the area of composition, the creative compositions of the primary school are replaced by the more analytic compositions of the secondary school. The child who in the elementary school has explored the phonemic alphabet, syntactic manipulations, or compounding is likely better to comprehend these subjects when he encounters a formal study of them in the junior high school or high school. A child who has been asked consistently to make inferences and discover analogies is likely to comprehend better the nature of induction and the logical implications of analogies when he encounters these subjects, say, in the senior high school. The boy who has had to write for a particular audience, who has had to choose appropriate fictional or rhetorical forms for them, a diction, a "logic," a set of sentence patterns, and a rhetorical organization which is most likely to persuade that audience, may better understand the formal structure of the rhetorical discipline when he meets it in the senior high school.

As a student turns from the wide-eyed child to the gawky adolescent, the academic demands which are placed upon him are heavier and more complex. He is asked to be a man intellectually. He is likely to be a better man in this sense if he has known, as a child, the best literature which he can know at that level, if he knows a description of the language which is simple but accurate. Such is the belief, however naive, which underlies the structure of the elementary school program.

Unit 45: Folk Tale:

TALL TALE AMERICA

FOLK TALE:
TALL TALE AMERICA

CORE TEXT:

Walter Blair, "Pecos Bill, King of Texas Cowboys," Tall Tale America (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1944).

ALTERNATE SELECTIONS:

Tales of other folk heroes included in Tall Tale America would serve suitably as alternate selections, especially the chapters about Mike Fink, Davy Crockett, or Windwagon Smith.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

This unit is the second "tall tale" unit in the curriculum, the second unit on perhaps the most typically American form of folk literature. The form of the tall tale is so expressive of the American temperament that it has been taken to the hearts of the American people, and the tall tales have been told, retold, expanded, and embellished so much that they are truly "of the folk." The multitude of stories surrounding the legendary cowboy Pecos Bill, like the other bodies of tall tales about Paul Bunyan, Febold Feboldson, Mike Fink, Johnny Appleseed, Davy Crockett, etc., humorously embodies in one exaggerated hero the qualities exhibited by the pioneering spirits in their efforts to tame the American West and to impose their civilization on a new world dominated by powerful, usually violent, natural forces. The tall tale is valuable as an expression of the expansive enthusiasm with which the American historically has met problems and challenges, but its greatest value lies in the entertainment provided by its straight-faced humor.

The objectives of the unit are (1) to provide students with an enjoyable experience with some typical American folk literature; (2) to provide a comparison of American folk tale forms and the common European folk tale forms as represented by the collections of the Brothers Grimm; and (3) to develop in the students an awareness of the creativity necessary to produce works of imagination and humor.

Beginning in the first grade, the series of units on the folk tale moves through each grade level with a few familiar folk stories in a great variety of modes and from a great variety of cultures. In each group the children are introduced to works which share certain characteristics because of their common background in folk traditions. The units of the first three grade levels developed a number of the oral, repetitive, and structural features of folk tales. This unit builds directly out of the fourth grade unit on "Febold Feboldson," and it builds directly toward those secondary units which deal with the techniques of folk literature and with heroic legends embodying the ideals of Western civilization.

As a representation of the Great Western Cowboy, the story of Pecos Bill is closely related to the units on historical fiction and biography that deal with the making of the nation. It will be especially interesting for the students to compare the problems and the solutions to those problems that face Pecos Bill with those that face the characters of Children of the Covered Wagon, included in another fifth grade unit. Since American tall tales tend to express the heroic qualities of men as they struggle with their problems and their environment, this unit prepares the student for the eighth grade units on the hero and the Grade 10 unit, The Leader and the Group.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Genre

There is considerable disagreement regarding the origin of folk tales, but they imaginatively represent the events of human life. Folk tales grew and were passed from country to country. The customs, taboos, rules, and beliefs of the people were displayed in the tales, and they were interpreted according to the beliefs of the groups who told or read them. Often the story is a serious one (originally intended for adults) with a human hero or heroine and a happy ending. At the beginning of the story the hero is often obscure or despised; he may appear stupid or lacking in civic virtues. Because of his character and worthiness, the hero wins the reward of fame, fortune, often love, or all three.

The tall tale "genre" includes legends, jokes, songs, tunes, dances, and games, as well as rhymes, riddles and wise sayings. At times it is tragic, but more often--with solemn tone--humorous and ridiculous. A story may come from a dozen different sources in various parts of the country. One version may be almost identical with another or it may be just a little more absurd. The teller frequently presents his story as though the incident actually happened to him, or as one that was related to him by a most honest and reliable person--frequently a grandfather.

The tales were probably created by individuals, but most of them were passed along for many years (with changes and embellishments) before folklorists saw the value of collecting and recording them. These scholars have found the earthy dialects of backwoodsmen, sailors, and lumberjacks for instance an excellent source of tales.

Character

Usually the hero's parents are vague or ordinary characters, but the hero is always quite remarkable, both in ability and size. His wit is sharp and his physical strength is tremendous. He not only makes light of hardships but looks for that which is challenging. He attacks the impossible, seldom loses, and wins against great odds. Frequently, in order to solve the stupendous problems which face him, the tall tale hero finds it necessary to invent something--a custom, a saying, an animal, some mechanical device, etc.--so that the American tall tale resembles Kipling's Just So Stories in explanations of "how things got that way." Of modest parentage, Pecos Bill is the typical hero of tall tales. Bill is remarkable from infancy, but since he was literally thrown out on his own at an early age, his infancy was brief. He is powerful, smart, and inventive. Pecos Bill, as other tall-tale heroes, makes light of individual hardships--the world is his little oyster, and he will open it. Numerous episodes in the story show how he thrives on challenging problems and how he always comes out on top.

As a hero, Pecos Bill, like Febold Feboldson, incorporates the heroic characteristics of the culture he represents all rolled up into one larger-than-life figure. In order to conquer the obstacles that beset him, the early cowboy had to be strong, courageous, inventive, tremendously durable, impervious to discouragement, and he had to have the capacity for humor that made constant harassment bearable. In a very real sense, the hero of a series of tall tales embodies the ideal qualities required by the American people to "tame the West": he must bring strength and intelligence, method and efficiency, to the task.

Structure

The story of Pecos Bill as a whole follows the motif of isolation from home and the confrontation with a monster, but so many episodes have grown up in the tradition that Bill meets a great many monsters. The basic pattern of each of the episodes about Pecos Bill is the same: Bill is faced with some kind of problem or obstacle, and through his strength, courage, and confidence, he solves the problem at hand in a grand and glorious manner. As is true in most series of folk tales since they grow from "yarn-swapping sessions" in which the object is for each yarn to top the preceding one, the continuity of the narrative is served by the fact that Bill's inventive solution of one problem frequently leads to another. The plot of each of these episodes corresponds roughly to the common folk tale pattern of the confrontation with a monster. The monsters that Bill faces are real enough--they beset all the pioneers: heat, cold, wind (especially "cyclones"), drought, flood, wild animals, hostile Indians, and "wild people." The pattern throughout the body of tales remains episodic and serial.

Theme

The theme of the story, like its humor and language, is a thoroughly American one: hard work is good and laziness evil--the main job of the hero is to bring civilization to the frontier. Kid is evil because he is lazy. Pecos Bill is good because he brings method and efficiency to the frontier. The method by which Pecos Bill teaches his cowhands is much simpler than that originally used by his helpers. Each of his improvements leads to the next. The "Rounding-up" of the cattle in turn is followed by "Branding the herds," etc. While each encounter parallels the previous, each also describes the next important phase in the development of the cowboy business.

Style

In American tall stories, particular attention may be given to detail: the time and place of the incident or incidents are clearly stated instead of being set in the world of "once upon a time." In folk tales like Grimm's Fairy Tales, the story might begin with "Once upon a time," or "A long time ago," but in the American folk tale we can expect to see a beginning such as "Pecos Bill was brought up by a coyote."

Much of the enjoyment of the clever tale is found in its many colorful descriptions. Although there is no description of the Texas Gallinippers, the reader can visualize the appearance of these long-beaked creatures from the account of the "dive-bomber" tactics as they soar around the big black kettle which protects Little Bill. The reader can picture in his mind the meeting of Bowleg Gerber and Pecos Bill while Bill is a member of the coyote pack. The account of Pecos Bill's and Bowleg Gerber's studying their reflections in the creek is a highlight of the story. The teacher will find here an excellent opportunity to investigate rather extensively the differences between denotative and connotative dimensions of meaning.

A large part of this tale is written in appealing dialogue form. The dialogue of the story contains vivid, picturesque words and terms which are representative of Texas "cowboy lingo." Pecos Bill's father seems all the more vivid as we hear him repeatedly use the word "varmint." The reader knows, as he continues reading, that the term will appear again and again in the "Ole Man's" conversation. No less appealing are Pecos Bill's repeated conversations recalling the days when he was a member of a coyote pack. The reader expects him to say, "when I was a coyote." The dialogue found in this tale is an excellent vehicle for teaching something about the nature of colloquial and local speech, and the teacher who undertakes the unit should know something about American dialects (see the ninth grade unit concerning social dialects).

Throughout the story, exaggeration, wit, and humor predominate. Obviously these are centered upon Texas cowpunching. The stories are rich with the preposterous figures of speech characteristic of the tall tale. The teacher should investigate the figurative language rather carefully with the students, especially since they will thoroughly enjoy the humor involved. (The teacher should be quite familiar with the material on figurative language found in the Grade 9 unit, Syntax and the Rhetoric of the Sentence.)

Personifications occur; they heighten the good humor. "The Great Drought" is personified to the degree that it possesses the power to cause the hardships endured by the human inhabitants and the cattle in Texas. A more pronounced example of personification is that of the cyclone, which is treated as a young bronco who matures to full growth. The parts of the cyclone's anatomy (its "neck" and "Adam's apple") and its personality traits are specified ("sun-fishing," "pin-wheeling," "side-throwing," and "high-diving"). The taming of the cylone comes to be the taming of a bronco.

Onomatopoeia is not extensively used; however, the few times that it is employed are excellent. For instance, the Texas Gallinippers aim and dive at the iron kettle and hit it with their long pointed beaks, making a "metallic ping." The Gallinippers bang against the kettle and sink their bills into it, producing the sound of the "patter of rain on a tin roof." Onomatopoeia is not confined to the Gallinippers alone: recall the "goo, goo, goo" of the baby Pecos Bill trying to swallow an axe handle . . .

The metaphors found in this tale should also sharpen the reader's perception: the comparison of the dryness of the prairie to the texture of a bride's biscuits, the reference to the cowboybusiness being more "messed up than a baby that has dumped a bowl of spinach over its head," etc. The teacher need not search these distinctive metaphors out; the students will delight in doing so. They will also undoubtedly delight in manufacturing great numbers of such comparisons themselves.

The central device, and the most distinctive feature, of the story throughout is exaggeration, and really the greatest example of exaggeration is the whole remarkable life of Pecos Bill.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. The teacher could introduce this unit by reviewing with the class what they remember of the genre of folk tales, and especially what they recall of the feats of Febold Feboldson if they have had that unit in the fourth grade. The teacher should perhaps briefly describe some of the heroes of tall tales in America.

II. The method of presentation may vary according to the supplies available. If enough books can be made available to the students, reading by the group might work very well. Whether the story is read by the students or by the teacher, however, the reading should be carefully prepared (which means that reading by students must be assigned beforehand so that those who are to read can prepare themselves well) and presented aloud in class. Since these tall tales have arisen in the oral traditions of folk literature, it is especially important that they be presented orally in class.

III. Particularly if the story is read aloud in class, a discussion might follow each distinct episode, or closely related series of episodes. Such a discussion might center around such questions as the following:

1. What are the characteristics of a folk tale?
2. How can this tale be called a folk tale?
3. What exaggeration did you hear in this story?
4. What problem or problems did Pecos Bill face in this tale?
5. How did the problem develop?
6. How did the author explain or describe the problem to the reader?
7. In what ways did Pecos Bill solve the problem that were different from the ways most people would use?
8. Was the problem a problem that most people could "solve," or was it something that most people would simply have to "endure"?
9. What was the outcome of Bill's solution?

Composition Activities

I. The students will probably be interested in making up their own tall tales. The teacher should prepare them for such an activity by making sure that they understand the characteristics of the hero or leader and the nature of the enemies their hero might encounter.

II. To prepare the students for the details of writing their own tall tales, the teacher might have the students perform an exercise on description: let them list the six "enemies" encountered by Pecos

Bill and describe each in their own words. The enemies would be Texas Gallinippers, Panthers, Coyote, the seven-foot cowboy, the cyclone, and Sweet Sue. The students could then write their ideas of each. (If the students have met other similar characters [Paul Bunyan, Davy Crockett, Johnny Appleseed], they might also list and then describe enemeies encountered by these "heroes.") Encourage the students to achieve as much exaggeration and humor in these descriptions as they can manage.

Language Explorations

I. Vocabulary: suggestions for "fun with words." The teacher might be surprised at the mileage students could get from words like these:

Texas Gallinippers
hog-rendering kettle
invented a dodge
"Get Along Little Dogie"
Mr. Anonymous
goggle-eyed
monotonous
varmints
jounts
tenderfeet
cowslip
gallumph
sniveler

II. Diction

A. Figurative language

Have the students reword some of the sentences containing figures of speech. Then discuss the effects the changes have on the meaning and/or the impact of the sentences. Notice whether the changes improve or decrease the effectiveness of the sentence, whether they simply "flatten out" the sentence, whether they actually change the central meaning, etc. The best source of examples will be the students themselves, as they recall the distinctive features of the story.

B. Dialect

Discuss dialects of various areas of the United States. Have the students examine closely a page or two of the story to select and discuss the dialect features of the language they find. They might compare some dialogue in this story with that from another tall tale, about Febold Feboldson, Paul Bunyan, Mike Fink, etc.

Extended Activities

Cowboy songs:

"Whoopee Ti Yi Yo, Git Along Little Dogies"

"The Old Chisholm Trail"

"The Dying Cowboy"

--from 357 Songs We Love to Sing (Minneapolis: Hall & McCreary Co.)

POETRY:

Carl Sandburg, "Yarns" Golden Treasury of Poetry

(This brief section of The People, Yes summarizes for the student [or may introduce to him] many of the most popular "legends" of tall tale lore.)

The following poem is a famous and very "American" literary yarn, and is particularly popular with fifth grade boys.

CASEY AT THE BAT

by
Ernest Lawrence Thayer

It looked extremely rocky for the Mudville nine that day:
The score stood two to four, with but one inning left to play.
So, when Cooney died at second, and Burrows did the same,
A pallor wreathed the features of the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go, leaving there the rest,
With the hope which springs eternal within the human breast.
For they thought: "If only Casey could get a whack at that,"
They'd put even money now, with Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, and likewise so did Blake,
And the former was a pudd'n, and the latter was a fake.
So on that stricken multitude a deathlike silence sat;
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all.
And the much-despised Blakey tore the cover off the ball.

And when the dust had lifted, and they saw what had occurred,
There was Blakey safe at second, and Flynn a-huggin' third.

Then from the gladdened multitude went up a joyous yell--
It rumbled in the mountaintops, it rattled in the dell;
It struck upon the hillside and rebounded on the flat;
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place,
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face;
And when responding to the cheers he lightly doffed his hat,
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hand with dirt,
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his
shirt;
Then when the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,
Defiance glanced in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the
air,
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped;
"That ain't my style," said Casey, "Strike one," the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,
Like the beating of the storm waves on the stern and distant
shore.
"Kill him! kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand;
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his
hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;
He stilled the rising tumult, he made the game go on;
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew;
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and the echo answered
"Fraud!"
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed:
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles
strain,
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let the ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lips, his teeth are clenched in
hate.

He pounds with cruel vengeance his bat upon the plate;
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright,
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light;
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children
 shout,
But there is no joy in Mudville -- mighty Casey has struck out.

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Maria Leach, *The Rainbow Book of American Folk Tales and Legends* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1958).

Leigh Peck, *Pecos Bill and Lightning* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1940).

For the teacher

Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1946).
A "standard" work, along with the works of Louise Pound, on the American folktale.

Unit 46: Folk Tale:

RAPUNZEL

THE WOODCUTTER'S CHILD

THE THREE LANGUAGES

FOLK TALE:
RAPUNZEL
THE WOODCUTTER'S CHILD
THE THREE LANGUAGES

CORE TEXTS:

"Rapunzel"
"The Woodcutter's Child"
"The Three Languages"
--from The Brothers Grimm, Fairy Tales (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961).

ALTERNATE TEXTS:

"The Frog Prince"
"The White Snake"
"The Three Feathers"
--from The Brothers Grimm, Fairy Tales (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

By the time most students study this unit in the elementary program they will have been exposed to nearly every type of "folk literature": (a) the simple traditional "folk tale," the "fairy tale," and the "tall tale," all developed in the series of elementary units on the folk tale; (b) the myth, and (c) the fable, treated in separate series of units. The folk tales for this unit employ most of the elements common to these various kinds of stories, but they all have a complexity of form and meaning that we have not encountered before in our discussions. Within the genre of "folk tale," we will treat the stories for this unit as representatives of types according to another kind of classification--we will treat these tales as representing the romance, the allegory, and the satire as types of folk tales. But we will also find that the best way to get at the meanings of these stories is to recognize that the greater complexity of meaning evident in them is still expressed through the same stylistic and structural devices that we have noted to be so common in the simpler folk tales.

The objectives of this unit are (1) to provide the students with an enjoyable experience in hearing folk tales, an important part of their literary heritage; (2) to emphasize the importance of such tales as a part of the oral traditions of all cultures; (3) to review the common structural and stylistic devices of folk literature; and (4) to introduce stories with relatively complex and subtle shades and levels of meaning clothed in the folk tale form.

Beginning with the first grade "folk tale" unit, this series of units moves through each grade level with a few familiar folk tales selected from a great variety of cultures and recorded in a great variety of modes. In each group the students are introduced to works with characteristics common to tales with oral folk origins. The first grade unit concentrated on the oral and repetitive features of the folk tale; the second grade unit exhibited certain common plot patterns; the third grade unit introduced the student to the magical world of fairyland and reviewed the common structural motifs of folk literature; the fourth grade unit and the other fifth grade unit examined the tall tale, the most typically American form of folk literature; this unit builds upon the knowledge of all those units to begin an investigation of the symbolic and allegorical meanings that the devices common to all folk literature tend to express.

As an introduction to the symbolic levels of meaning that most literature possesses, this unit is closely related to two other fifth grade units that are designed for the same purpose--the "fanciful stories" unit on "The Snow Queen" and the "other lands" unit on The Door in the Wall. These units all build directly toward the Grade 7 units, The Making of Stories and The Meaning of Stories. Since the myth uses many of the same devices for similar purposes, this unit relates to the series of units on the myth, including the trilogy of units in the seventh grade program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Author

Since the stories for this unit are folk tales, one cannot claim to reveal the "author" in a short sketch. These tales are all, however, from the collection of German folk tales compiled by the "Brothers Grimm," a name so closely connected with fairy tales that many people actually think of them as the "authors" of the tales they relate. In reality, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were much less "authors" than the other notable collectors and retellers of folk tales--France's Charles Perrault; Norway's Asbjornsen, Moe, and Dasent; and England's Joseph Jacobs. Indeed the Brothers Grimm (as they habitually called themselves) contributed most significantly to the world of folklore by being scrupulously careful in recording the folk tales as they found them among the people. They did not edit, they did not "retell," they did not adapt--they recorded. They used only the purest methods of scholarly research, and introduced the world of scholarship to the world of folklore. (See the introductory material in the core text for additional biographical information and for a brief résumé of their career as folklore scholars.)

Genre

The folk tale has arisen in nearly every culture at a relatively primitive, usually pre-literate, stage in the development of the culture. The emphasis of the stories is always on action--the plot unfolds rapidly with little emphasis on motive or psychology. Explaining rarely occurs in the folk tales; what happens, happens. The characters do not look before and after, pining for what is not. A man can love dearly, and yet in a moment of displeasure say, "Off with her head." Off it goes. The stories are simple and concrete. The action begins, "Bang!" The conflict is clearly defined; the conclusions are quick. Yet, in their simplified plot patterns using their flattened-out characters, folk tales are usually in some sense symbolic. Recalling their origins in the early stages of civilization, one can say that folk tales incorporate fragments of the history, the rituals, the religious beliefs, and the superstitions of a people; and these are rudiments which express symbolically the ethical and spiritual values of the culture within which the tales originated.

The more complex a story is in structure and detail, the more likely it is to cloak a number of levels of meaning. For this reason, the "fairy tale," as we have distinguished it from other folk tales in the third grade unit, is more likely to reveal subtle meanings than the other forms. In contrast to the simpler folk tales, like those of the first and second grade "folk tale" units, the fairy tale contains the elaborate machinery of fairyland--magic spells, fairies, witches, magic wands, magic words, etc. It takes place in the brilliantly rich world of the court, or at least it usually ends there, with beautiful princesses, handsome princes, towering castles, and buckets and buckets of gold. The stories, to fit the subject, are told with an elaborate, graceful style, full of glowing descriptive passages--all missing from the stark simplicity of the simpler folk tale. And the little Red Riding-Hoods of fairy tales never get "eaten up" (although lots of the wicked characters do, in effect), but the heroines or the heroes go off to live happily ever after with gorgeous people in gorgeous castles.

This is the kind of story we are dealing with in this unit, but we will attempt to classify such stories even further according to the kind of meaning they express. The teacher must be aware by this time that whenever we attempt to classify these stories, by genre, by structural motif, by theme, or whatever, we encounter all sorts of difficulties and commit all kinds of cross-ranking. Anyone can observe that certain tales may contain characteristics that would allow them to appear in a number of categories within the same classification. The combinations of, variations in, and interrelationships among elements of structure, theme, etc., become more and more numerous as the stories become more and more complex. It is precisely these complexities and variations which give the stories their richness of meaning, so that the teacher is encouraged to allow her students to explore them fully.

In this unit we shall take three "fairy tales" (within the context of the preceding discussion) and attempt to reveal their various levels of meaning, and the devices they use to express that meaning. Commonly the folk tale contains a strong element of allegory--allegory which, although less formal and precise than "literary" allegory, is still well-defined. Again and again in the folk tale, we discover that step-mothers are wicked, that youngest sons overcome the barriers of primogeniture, that love finds a way, that beauty symbolizes goodness and ugliness symbolizes evil, that kindness pays and cruelty does not, that princes (or princesses) may be bewitched and need commoners to rescue them, that the good (and lowly) receive their reward and that the evil are punished. Such are the ideas and the narrative symbols which rise from the imaginations of the lower classes in a preliterate culture. That these ideas and symbols appear in the stories chosen for this unit is not accidental.

"Rapunzel," the first story in this unit, appears to be most like the fairy tales studied before in the third grade unit. It could, indeed, profitably be studied in precisely the same way those stories were studied. Its structure and its devices are conventional, just as are those of "Cinderella" or "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood." But we can also classify the story within the genre of "fairy tale" as a "romance." The word "romance" is used here more in the sense that it was used during the medieval period than in the popular modern sense, which simply refers to matters of "love." But one distinctive feature of such fairy tales admittedly is that the plot tends to revolve about the romantic interest of two beautiful young people, one or both of whom are usually of the nobility. The meaning of this story quite obviously lies in the moral allegory: the story makes clear that the wise, the kind, the prudent, the virtuous triumph in the end over adversity, and over the wicked, the evil, the sinful.

The second of the tales in the unit, "The Woodcutter's Child," is perhaps of the three tales the most unlike the other fairy tales we have examined. The conventions and the machinery are the common things, but the story is transparently allegorical. In contrast to the kind of fairy tale labeled as "romance," there is little interest here in marriage, or in any of the material goods of this world. The quest of this story concerns peace of mind; the interest lies in the search for goods, not of the world, but of the spirit, of the soul. "The Woodcutter's Child" is a symbolic story of the fall from innocence through temptation and the path to redemption. The moral allegory of "Rapunzel" exists as an "extra," a side benefit for the discriminating reader; but the spiritual allegory of "The Woodcutter's Child" constitutes overwhelmingly the primary concern of the telling of the tale.

The third tale, "The Three Languages," uses the vehicle of the folk tale to express another dimension of meaning: satire. Since the folk tale originated in the lower echelons of society, it frequently contained an element of satire upon the upper classes, the rich and powerful, whether clerical or secular nobility. Yet the havens of the powerful are havens indeed: the good girl's highest reward is to marry a prince who emerges from a stylized palace and an ideal time and space. "The Woodcutter's Child" belongs to a group of fairy tales which frequently deal in satire: the hero is a "youngest son" who appears to be stupid. He is also kind and virtuous, however, and because of this he attracts the aid of the fairy world, enabling him to expose the follies and vices of his society. In the process he wins the hand of the beautiful princess and "half the kingdom besides."

This discussion does not intend to suggest that every story of a young son is satiric; that every story of the perils of princes and princesses is moral allegory; or that every story of a person who betrays a trust given him is spiritual allegory. What the unit does intend to do is to exhibit ways in which certain forms can express certain meanings. Neither does this discussion intend to suggest to the teacher that she expect her students to be able to determine all the subtle levels of meaning folk tales can contain or that she attempt to teach them to extract those meanings during the course of this one unit. This curriculum has been designed to create, by this time, a relatively well-developed "form consciousness" in children. After a repeated exposure to such matters over a relatively long period of time, the students should be able to recognize particularly skillful and fortunate "marriages" of form and meaning. The enjoyment (and instruction) derived from the inseparable combinations of form and meaning that distinctively mark literary works of real merit is just what causes reading literature to grow into an exciting, valuable, life-long experience.

Since this unit includes three stories quite different in form and in purpose, for the sake of convenience the remainder of the background information section will present each work separately.

1. RAPUNZEL

Structure

"Rapunzel" contains nearly all of the structural motifs common to the folk tale, with refinements and complex variations. Although Rapunzel is born to parents who want a child and who love her dearly, she is not born to a secure home. A threat hangs over her family, an evil debt (another device common in fairy tales, cf. "Rumplestiltskin," etc.). When Rapunzel is taken by her witch foster mother, the debt is paid; but, in the paying of the debt, Rapunzel is isolated from her family. And, although this isolation is deep, it is nothing compared with the deeper isolation into which she is thrown when the witch cruelly parts her from her love, the prince. Tears are the magic which breaks the spell; like the tears in Andersen's "The Snow Queen," they allow tenderness and gentleness to triumph over wickedness and insensitivity. The Prince in a sense takes the place of a parent as he opens the eyes of the young girl to the beauty of the world and as he leads her to his secure and princely home.

Interpretation

"Rapunzel" is the story of the growing-up of a young girl, guarded overzealously and kept from "experience" by the forces of wickedness. When maturity is demanded of Rapunzel, it is demanded suddenly, and she is not ready for it; as a consequence, both she and her deliverer suffer. The story places a premium on wisdom, particularly the wisdom of maturity, that born out of suffering. Because Rapunzel's parents act unwisely before she is born, they suffer. Because Rapunzel and her prince act unwisely, they too suffer. This suffering comes not because the couples do not care for one another (they do) but because they do not possess the maturity and wisdom to overcome the frigid, unloving forces personified in the witch.

This tale, like most fairy tales, uses beauty to symbolize goodness and ugliness to symbolize wickedness. Rapunzel is "the most beautiful child under the sun"; therefore, she is good. The prince is young and handsome; therefore, he is to be trusted. The witch is altogether ugly, evil, and "sterile"; she has the power to place Rapunzel in a "wilderness" of dreary gray thorn-hedges,where love seems impossible.

This rather general use of symbolic detail is complemented by occasional bits of explicit allegory. Rapunzel's loss of hair and banishment is a high point in the story. It is a tragedy, yet not such a serious one as the greater tragedy: the permanent separation of the two young people. To make this point stand out, the story makes use of a short allegory: the witch tells the prince that the pretty bird (Rapunzel) is no longer in her nest (the tower) and that the cat (the witch) has seized her so that the prince will not see her again. The frigid and the evil impose suffering upon the gentle and beautiful, but that suffering is the occasion of a greater wisdom and love. The ending of the story comes quickly; the prince wanders blindly "for some years," but time seems to be frozen during this period. Then before one paragraph is completed after the witch's final proclamation, the couple is happily united. The greater good has come out of evil.

Style

The story depends on the usual machinery of the folk tale; magic is used to place Rapunzel in the tower, a ritual formula allows her to let down her hair and so forth. Stylistically, the story makes use of the usual devices of the folk tale and of children's literature: formulaic repetition (the formula used to get Rapunzel to let down her hair), brief and pointed dialogue, etc. Perhaps the finest stylistic feature of the story is its sensitive description, a descriptive detail which reminds one of the more stylized passages in the medieval romance. There is a beautiful garden with beautiful well-flavored rampion (or radishes) and lovely flowers and shrubs. Rapunzel has splendid long hair which is twenty ells long and as fine as gold; she has a water-pure voice. The prince is young and handsome. The thorns are the thorns of fairyland and the wilderness is the wilderness of allegory.

2. THE WOODCUTTER'S CHILD

Structure

"The Woodcutter's Child" is also built upon variations of the common motifs of the folk tale. The girl originates in a home that is loving, but insecure because of its poverty. She is rescued and established in a secure home, the "Land of Happiness," but when she betrays the trust placed in her, she is banished into isolation, where "she remained a long time, experiencing the misery and poverty of the world." The monster she faces, however, lies within her, so that even when she is rescued from her physical isolation, her spiritual isolation remains. Only when she can conquer the monstrous pride and repent of the guilt within her does the queen escape from her hard-hearted isolation.

Within the structural patterns of this story, one finds three particularly common structuring devices: (1) the granting of favor with one "forbidden" condition, which is usually violated; (2) the importance of a magic number, in this case thirteen; and (3) the incremental repetition of incident and language, in the conventional triads.

Interpretation

The theme of this story is a moral one showing that disobedience is a sin, but stressing that denial of disobedience is a much greater sin than the actual act of disobedience. The theme stresses the Guardian Angel's willingness to forgive and shows her great love for the woodcutter's child.

Distinct symbols, characteristic of the Christian folk allegory of the Brothers Grimm era, are found in "The Woodcutter's Child":

1. Land of Happiness--Innocence
2. Forbidden Door--Sin
3. Three Angels--The Trinity
4. Finger of Gold--The desire for worldly possessions
5. Wilderness-Sin and Temptation

The Queen does not find true happiness until she openly admits her guilt to the Guardian Angel. Although the Guardian Angel has persisted, she is willing to forgive.

The characterization of evil, which here has its origin in the heart, is made vivid through the words of the maiden: "Now I am alone I can peep in, and no one will know what I do." The result of the evil is clearly presented in the words of the angel, "Thou hast not obeyed me, not done my bidding; therefore thou art no longer worthy to remain among good children." The goodness of the Guardian Angel is evident in a sequence of events:

1. She takes care of the woodcutter's child when the parents cannot.
2. She allows the child freedom to open the first twelve doors.
3. She offers her continual opportunities to admit her guilt.
4. She forgives her even after many visits, when at last the Queen, who is condemned to death, admits her guilt.

The Queen's repentance is good and gains favor in the eyes of the Guardian Angel; the Angel returns the Queen's three children, restores her speech, and promises her a happy future. The center of this theme appears in the words of the Guardian Angel, "Whoever will repent and confess their sins, they shall be forgiven."

3. THE THREE LANGUAGES

Structure

The pattern of this plot is like that in many of Grimm's Fairy Tales; the main character journeys away from his home to encounter a series of characters who exemplify various follies and evils in society and then ultimately comes to provide for himself a stable niche in society. The plot fits almost perfectly the familiar pattern of the escape from a harsh home and the miraculous creation of a new, happier and better one. The story is, like many folk tales, arranged in a series of triads. The father asks, "What have you learned?" The boy replies, "I have learned what the dogs bark." The father asks the question a second time when the boy returns from the second year: "What have you learned?" The boy replies, "I have learned what the birds sing." On the boy's third return, the father asks a third time, "What have you learned this time," and the boy replies, "I have learned the language of the frogs." Each of these sets of questions and answers is parallel to a later incident.

Interpretation

The languages learned by the boy, the languages of the dogs, the birds, and the frogs, represent the three major social orders of a traditional hierarchical society: the estates of the peasant (or commoner), the noble, and the cleric. All three estates are satirized, but the nobles and clerics are, as one would expect in a folk tale, satirized somewhat more severely: the incompetence of the nobles and the foolish politics of the clergy are the targets of the satire. In learning the language of all nature, the boy has learned the language of the three estates and so has learned to handle them and their foolishness.

Good and evil in the story are frankly represented in blacks and whites. The boy, in that he solves the mystery of the dogs and frees the people from the plague, represents the good; good is in the beautiful maiden whom the boy marries; the servants of the count, letting the boy live instead of killing him as his father had wished them to do, share in the goodness. The father who disowned his son when he couldn't learn anything is entirely wicked; the count is incompetent; and those who choose the leader of Christendom are frivolous in their methods of choosing.

Style

The symbolism of the story is enhanced by its broad, somewhat Gothic descriptive effects: the beautiful maiden, the two snow-white doves, the wild and barking hounds who feed on human flesh and guard the treasure.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. Each story should be discussed as soon as it has been read (preferably read aloud to the class). The following guides to discussion are recommended:

A. "Rapunzel"

Discuss what kinds of actions show that the witch is evil; what kinds of actions show that the prince and Rapunzel are good. Ask the students to think of possible reasons why the Prince and Rapunzel have to suffer so much. Ask them what they think the meaning of the story to be. Ask them to mention other stories which are, in some ways, like this story in plot, characterization, descriptive effects.

B. "The Woodcutter's Child"

Ask leading questions which will help the children to identify the meaning of the story; their practice with fables should help them to identify the angel's final speech as giving the meaning. Then ask them what the Land of Happiness means, what the thirteenth door means, what the wilderness means, why the angel asks the girl to admit her sin. This should help the students to get at the story's concern with innocence and sin and its symbolic devices.

C. "The Three Languages:

Ask the students leading questions which will bring them to see the satire. Who is the author making fun of in the story: what kinds of people, etc? Ask the students to pair up the three kinds of birds with the three corresponding incidents in the story. Make a chart: (1) Bird Language; (2) Corresponding Incident; (3) Meaning of the Incident. Ask the students to speculate as to what each incident means in which the hero understands the language of a bird. Ask the students to discuss the "ugliest" picture presented in the story and the most beautiful one; get the students to notice the grotesque elements in the story (the dogs, etc.); ask them to discuss why the dogs and the plague are so evil. Ask the students why the hero of the story, who is a commoner, is allowed to get rid of the threat of the dogs and the plague. Why are not the great lords and churchmen allowed to do this? Tell the students to remember that this is a folk tale.

II. The number thirteen is of great importance in "The Woodcutter's Child." The pupils will already have heard that "Friday the thirteenth" is an unlucky day, or that number thirteen is "unlucky." With this background, they may be asked why the Brothers Grimm used the thirteenth and not the twelfth or fourteenth door to be the forbidden door in the story. (Their answers should show that the background of the number "13" makes the story more effective.)

The pupils may then be told that a number of the *Grimm Fairy Tales* employ the number thirteen as a part of the plot of their stories. The children may then be asked to find other fairy tales from the Grimm Brothers which have made use of the number 13 to tell effectively their story. A chart such as the following may be used.

Fairy Tale	How the number 13 is used
1. "The Twelve Brothers"	the 13th child was a daughter, and as a result the brothers were to die.
2. "Briar Rose"	Thirteen wise women in the domain, the 13th bringing misfortune.

Following this, other projects may follow in which the pupils find other *Grimm Fairy Tales* in which numbers play an important part. (For example, the number "three," as well as the number "seven," is used frequently.)

Composition Activities

I. The students might enjoy writing their own stories of young boys or girls who solve problems that mighty and powerful grown-ups cannot solve. They might envisage a small town that is threatened by some peril (either "real," like a plague of disease-carrying mosquitoes, or "humorous," like yellow paint running out of the town fountain instead of water, causing traffic jams by obscuring all the markings painted on the streets). Suggest to the students that there should be a "point" to their stories, and that one way of providing a point is to have the "hero" expose the silliness or wickedness of a "villain." (In beginning stories, pompous mayors make particularly apt villains; but students should not be led to the conclusion that all mayors are pompous and silly.)

II. The last sentence in one version of "Rapunzel"--"What became of the old witch no one ever knew"--may stimulate a session in creative writing. The teacher may write this sentence on the board and then ask the children to use their imaginations and to write what they think could have happened to the old witch.

III. As an exercise in oral composition, have each child in the room assume the identity of one of the characters in the fairy tales he has been reading. Have him prepare to answer a question such as a "Man In The Street" might ask: "What was the most exciting event in your life?" or "What is your greatest accomplishment?"

IV. "Rapunzel" employs a limerick to heighten the enjoyment in the story. This characteristic is found in other fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. Pupils at the fifth grade level enjoy limericks, and as a project they may be asked to find other fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm in which limericks are used:

Fairy Tale	Limerick	How Used
"The Frog Prince"		
"Little Lamb and Little Fish"		
"One-Eye, Two Eyes, Three-Eyes"		

Children enjoy writing limericks of their own. After reading several to the class, list some possible first lines--or have the children suggest first lines--and have them write their own. Suggested first lines:

1. There was a short girl with a hat
2. A bright young fellow named Joe
3. There was an old lady in Maine
4. There was a silly old horse
5. There was an old man in a room
6. A girl was once caught in the rain

Language Explorations

I. Syntax

These stories provide an opportunity to discuss sentence constructions which vary from those we hear in our everyday language. Appropriate sentences from folk tales can be placed on the chalk board, such as, "Child, how came you into this wilderness?" The children may then suggest how else such a question might be worded, such as, "Child, how did you come into this wilderness?" or with more exact meaning, "Child, how did you happen to come into this wilderness?"

The following sentences could be rewritten as a continuation of this type of exercise:

"This task he happily accomplished." (He happily accomplished this task.)

"In the deserted spot in which she was now enclosed, there stood an old hollow tree."

"In Switzerland there lived an old Count, who had an only son."

"His life he escaped with, but the thorns into which he fell put out his eyes."

II. Nature of Language

Place the following pairs of words on the chalk board and note the differences in spelling:

honor	defense	recognize
honour	defence	recognise

The students will recognize the fact that the words listed on top are spelled in the way to which the students are accustomed. The alternate spellings are British. A discussion centering around such differences should lead to the understanding that the printed letters are only symbols for sounds, and that the sequences of sounds are the real words involved in the discussion. In each case listed above, the pronunciation of the words is exactly the same, despite the difference in spelling.

III. Vocabulary

A. There are quite a few words in the stories for this unit that may be foreign to the students' experience. In order to expand their vocabularies, the class might discuss the meanings of such terms as:

twelve month	(year)
tresses	(hair)
skein	(strand of yarn)
chink	(crack)
thither	(to that place)
ells	(measure of cloth--the English ell was 45 inches and the Dutch 27 inches)

B. Locate the word "wing" in a dictionary. Use it in sentences--one for each of the listed meanings. Locate the word "order." Have the children write five expressions with the word "order" having a different meaning in each expression.

Examples:

wing: "part of a bird," "outlying part of "

order: "a command," "arranging"

wing of a bird
wing of a house
wing of an army
birds wing their way

alphabetical order
to order groceries
obey an order
room arranged in order

Almost certainly from the sentences or expressions that students provide it will become apparent that many words may have a number of different meanings depending upon the context in which they are used.

C. In connection with the previous exercise, you might use the following exercise to illustrate to the students that they cannot only discover which meaning of a word is intended by checking a dictionary, but that they can frequently make a good guess as to the meaning of an unfamiliar word by examining the context.

Have them read the sentence, "The curlew dipped his thin bill in the water," carefully. Even if they had never seen the word "curlew," they could find a clue to its meaning in the sentence. The clue word bill would reveal it to be some type of bird. Now they may read the following sentences carefully, watching for clues.

1. The man wore a sleeveless jerkin over his wool shirt.
   A jerkin is a __________. Clue __________

2. They seldom see strangers since they live so far from the highway.
   Seldom means __________. Clue __________

3. They retraced their steps to find the lost dog.
   Retraced means __________. Clue __________

4. We spent the night at a fishing lodge built close to the lake.
   A lodge is a __________. Clue __________

5. The strong gale seemed to be blowing from every direction.
   A gale is a __________. Clue __________

6. The puma growled and drew his sharp claws.
   A puma is a __________ Clue __________

7. The two pugilists were to fight on Saturday night.
   Pugilists are __________. Clue __________

8. His rock collection contained a choice specimen of gneiss.
   Gneiss is __________. Clue __________

9. Several frigates sailed into the bay.
   Frigates are __________. Clue __________

D. Use the following sentences either on the board or as dittoed handouts. Have the children look up the underlined word in a dictionary. Chose the meaning which best fits the word as it is used in the sentence.

1. The Indian brave paddled silently along in his canoe.
2. We studied the structure of the eye.
3. When they first appeared, horseless vehicles were thought to be very queer.
4. The searchlight was trained on the spot.
5. The youth unfurled the standard in the parade.
6. People associate jet with airplanes.
7. Longfellow was a scholar and a poet.
8. Tobacco is cured by hanging in sheds to dry.
9. Frightened by the explosion, my horse plunged and almost fell.
10. The primary job of the secretary is to keep the minutes.
11. We bought a rug at the clearance sale.
12. The old man sank wearily into a chair.
13. There was an impurity in the metal.
14. He heard an exclamation and looked up.
15. He replied with deep thoughtfulness.
16. It was a gloomy place in the woods.
17. As they walked they looked eagerly along the trail.
18. There was a bountiful crop of raspberries.
19. At Christmas there was a celebration.
20. His eyebrows twisted in bewilderment.
21. He worked patiently all winter on the cabinet.

Extended Activities

I. There is an excellent MGM filmstrip on "The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm." It is produced and distributed by the Society for Visual Education, Inc., 1345 Diversey Parkway, Chicago 14, Illinois.

II. The world of folk tale is so extensive as to allow the students almost limitless opportunity for further reading. Collect a shelf of books containing folk tales; ask each student to select his own book and read it to see if he can find stories like any one of the three treated as core readings. Ask one group of students to find a group of stories in Grimm which are like "The Three Languages"; ask another group to find a group like "Rapunzel": ask a third group to see if it can find any stories like "The Woodcutter's Child." Have the students tell the stories which they have discovered and how they are different in plot and in meaning. Then ask those students who have been reading outside Grimm to tell the best stories which they found in their individual reading; ask them to tell the country from which the story has come, the story itself, and what they find in the story. This may lead to some interesting comparisons with Grimm.

III. Let the children keep a list of magic people and the magic articles which they find in the fairy tales.

Examples:

People With Magic Power	Articles with Magic Power
Godmother in "Cinderella"	Wand in "Cinderella"
Dwarf in "Rumpelstiltskin"	Book in "Puss-in-Boots
	Cloaks, Apples, etc.

POETRY:

"King John and the Abbot of Canterbury"
Golden Treasury of Poetry
(This old folk tale in verse is another exemplification of the popular notion that "a fool may teach a wise man wit." The tale uses the device to expose the excessive follies of the mighty and powerful.)

"The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington" Golden Treasury of Poetry
(This popular ballad from English folk tradition displays the eventual triumph of true love over tribulation. Just as in "Rapunzel," a young couple is forced into a long separation but the lovers are eventually reunited because of their steadfastness and their growth in wisdom.)

John Hay, "The Enchanted Shirt" Golden Treasury of Poetry
(This poem once again exemplifies the "lesson" that the foolishness of even a king may be exposed and that he may receive his comeuppance at the hands of the lowly, in the process of gaining in wisdom.)

Winifred Welles, "Behind the Waterfall" Time for Poetry
(Children may enjoy comparing this picture of a bewitching little old lady to those that they discover in folk tales.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Wanda Gág (tr.), Tales from Grimm (New York: Coward-McCann, 1936).

Wanda Gág (tr.), More Tales from Grimm (New York: Coward-McCann, 1947).

These translations are especially adapted to the child's reading ability, but the folk tale flavor has been carefully preserved. Well illustrated.

Unit 47: Fanciful Tale:

THE SNOW QUEEN

FANCIFUL TALE:
THE SNOW QUEEN

CORE TEXT:

Hans Christian Andersen, "The Snow Queen," The Complete Andersen, trans. Jean Hersholt (New York: The Heritage Press, 1952).

Note: The story for this unit should be available in any good collection of Andersen's fairy tales, as well as in numerous anthologies. The teacher need not be overly concerned about the individual text, since the story is a "literary" fairy tale and the text should vary only with the translation and not with the "version" as folk tales do. There are other editions of Andersen's works published by Scribner's, 1950; Harcourt, Brace, 1938; Macmillan, 1953; Coward McCann, 1933; Grosset, 1945; Oxford, 1936 and 1945; etc. An especially fine illustrated version translated by Anne Scott is published by The Golden Press, 1959, entitled A Fairy Tale Book: Ten Favorite Stories.

ALTERNATE SELECTION:

Hans Christian Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," A Fairy Tale Book: Ten Favorite Stories (New York: The Golden Press, Inc., 1959).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

The story for this unit is one of the earliest stories written as a "modern fanciful tale." Hans Christian Andersen was probably the first man to use the fairy tale as a conscious literary form; consequently, his stories are nearly all based on the old devices of folk literature (many of them are just reworkings of the old fairy tales). However, he nearly always added some elements of Christian allegory to his stories. The objectives of this unit are (1) to introduce the children to a very large body of literature written in modern times but following closely the traditions of the old "folk" fairy tale; (2) to develop an awareness of extra-literal levels of meaning in literature; (3) to allow the children to make some simple analyses of symbolism and allegory, in a story whose symbolism is so transparent that even young children can perform successful analyses; and (4) to help satisfy the child's desire for fantasy.

Although Hans Christian Andersen might be considered the "father of modern children's literature," the first writer of stories specifically for children, it does not necessarily follow that his stories are the simplest of such literature. Indeed, we have studied in this curriculum a great number of especially-designed children's books written long after Andersen's death that suggest the opposite. Nearly all of Andersen's stories contain elements of symbolism and allegory, apparent only to older children and frequently only to sophisticated adult readers. The story for this unit, "The Snow Queen," contains symbolism so transparently obvious that it should be suitable for an introduction to symbolic writing. This unit is closely related to the other fifth and sixth grade units which attempt to present the same sort of introduction: the fifth grade units on the folk tale and The Door in the Wall, and the sixth grade units on Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and The Wind in the Willows. The unit prepares directly for those secondary units that analyze more closely the kinds of meaning that literature tends to convey, beginning with the Grade 7 units, The Making of Stories and The Meaning of Stories.

As a "literary" fairy tale, "The Snow Queen" is directly related to the third and fifth grade units on the "folk" fairy tale, whose stories very closely resemble this story of Andersen's. This unit is an important step in the sequential series of units on the fanciful tale in the elementary program, units which gradually build in complexity of form and meaning throughout the grades.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Author

The immortal Hans Christian Andersen is perhaps the most celebrated original storyteller the world has ever known. The road to fame was not easy for Andersen, the son of poor, uneducated Danish parents. As a boy, Hans was shy, superstitious, dreamy, and extremely awkward. He dreamed of becoming an actor, but spent a most miserable youth in Copenhagen failing utterly at one thing after another until he began to recreate old folk tales and to write new ones. Eventually he became a legend in his own time; perhaps no other author has been so honored during his own lifetime. He began his writing career by reworking fairy tales from the collection of the Brothers Grimm, but most of his best stories were entirely original, including "The Snow Queen." His stories are notable for their singular beauty and their appeal to children, although the bitterness of his early years is reflected quite clearly in his satirical stories. He strikes at the "snobs and fools" in high places because of whom he felt he had suffered, and his stories frequently represent symbolically some autobiographical experiences. The poor washerwoman in "Good-for-Nothing," standing in the cold river washing clothes until she is exhausted, represents his mother after a second marriage. "The Ugly Duckling," one of Andersen's most famous stories, parallels the author's struggle for fame and fortune.

Genre

As we have already noted, Hans Christian Andersen was probably the first man to use the fairy tale as a conscious literary form. Working as he did from old folk stories, his stories characteristically use the folk tale motifs and machinery, but in modified or rearranged combinations. The great number of stories which he himself created tend to use the same patterns and devices that we noted so frequently in the series of units on the folk tale: there are stories in which inanimate objects are personified and talking beasts are found; the stories generally take place in fairyland, the ideal world of no place and no time; they are full of magic and full of the richness and beauty of the court, the land of princes and beautiful princesses; they are full of the machinery of magic: magical transformations, long journeys undertaken with incredible speed, magic words and wicked spells, witches and fairies, and so on. As in most modern fanciful tales and old folk tales, Andersen's stories are unhampered by the necessity of sticking to the possible.

One can immediately see that this unit deals with a story in the folk tale tradition. In "The Snow Queen" nature takes on a human face and purpose. The tale begins realistically: two children are playing. A glass splinters; the magic begins. We are not surprised that birds and beasts speak and act as humans or superhumans. Time is frozen for the two young children as one searches for the other. Through love and tears the magic spell is broken. The lost child is found and has outgrown his wayward ways.

In contrast to most of the more recent fanciful tales, however, Andersen's stories tend to concentrate on the moral and spiritual instruction that can be gleaned from them. Sometimes the symbolism and allegory shine through very clearly, thinly veiled, as in "The Snow Queen"; at other times the satire and allegory (with adult irony jabbing at adult frailties) are hidden so deeply as to be apparent to only highly sophisticated readers. Outstanding characteristics of Andersen's writing are the wit and sharpness of his social observations, made evident so frequently by his Dickensian minor characters. The humor of his stories is an adult kind of humor, with satirical jabs at institutions and human nature that are hidden from the child reader. Andersen's morality is a Christian Sunday school kind of morality that frequently seems extremely naive and obtrusive to the adult reader. But, as in all fairy tales, the story is the thing and the "message" of the story is always carried within a robust plot. Usually an Andersen story begins with a person who meets with difficulties that obstruct his progress. After considerable discomfort and struggle, the hero successfully passes the tests and trials set up and attains Christian happiness.

The end is always the Christian moral end, not necessarily the "happy" one in which the hero wins the fair maiden and they go off to live happily ever after in a "castle-of-dreams-come-true."

Structure

The common structural motifs of folk literature form the basis for the structure of "The Snow Queen" just as they do for most of Andersen's fairy tales. Overall, the story follows the pattern of the journey from a secure home into the isolation and the mystery of the outside world of experience, the confrontation with a monster, and the journey back to the secure home after the monster has been overcome. "The Snow Queen" builds upon a series of episodes within this general framework, each of the episodes using one of the common motifs within its own structure--the contrast between the wise and the foolish, the confrontation with all sorts of difficulties or "monsters," etc. The structural patterns of the story are particularly suited to the thematic structures of the story--one "journeys" from the security of Christian innocence to the isolation of sin and wickedness out in the world of experience; and the repentant and joyous return to "God who is our Home" occurs only after the great toil and pain of defeating the forces of evil through sacrifice and compassionate faith and love.

Theme

The central concern of the story is to display the nature of innocence and sin. We see the happiness and contentment of Gerda. We see the similar happiness of Kay until wickedness, represented by the grains of the mirror, enters Kay's eye. And we note the contrast after wickedness enters Kay's heart. Finally, goodness is victorious, as Gerda's hot tears (representing goodness) melt the lump of ice (representing evil) around Kay's heart. Gerda's adventures in search of Kay elaborate the symbolism relating to innocence and guilt, good and evil.

Within the symbolism of the story lies a fierce anti-intellectualism characteristic of romantic literature. We have noted that the central concern of the story appears in the demonstration of the difference between innocence and sin; that difference is symbolized in the story primarily as the difference between faith and reason. When Kay was first stricken by the fragments of the devil's mirror, "He wanted to say his prayers, but could remember nothing but the multiplication table." Near the end of the story, we find Kay in the palace of ice, playing the "icy game of reason," trying to solve through reason the riddle of "eternity." Significantly, he can make no progress until the icy grip that reason has on him has been melted by compassion and humility; then with renewed faith the puzzle of "eternity" magically falls into place.

So with a multitude of transparent symbols, "The Snow Queen" accomplishes its variety of themes: goodness triumphs over evil; after the fashion of William Blake's poetry, the story affirms the superiority of a child-like innocence over the corruption of experience. The warmth of humanity--love, compassion, emotion, joy--melts the icy grip of cold reason; truth must be apprehended by faith, not by reason. As we find affirmed in so many children's fanciful tales (among them Charlotte's Web [Grade 4] and And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street [Grade 2]), the world of imagination perceived by a child is superior to the harsh reality of the adult world. Just as in most of Andersen's stories, this story carries the dominating theme: "We belong to God. God is love." All of these forces of good are personified in Gerda, the "perfect" child; as the old Finland woman says, "I can give her no greater power than she possesses already: don't you see how great that is? Don't you see how men and animals are obliged to serve her, and how she gets on so well in the world, with her naked feet? She must not learn her power from us: it consists in this, that she is a dear innocent child." Nearly every concrete image in the story, and there are hundreds of them, is a particular symbol, just as Gerda's naked feet are a symbol of her faith, humility, and innocence. The flowers, the animals, the river, the full descriptions; all play their role in building up to the climactic theme: "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." And at last Kay and Gerda understand: "There they both sat, grown up, and yet children--children in heart--and it was summer, warm, delightful summer."

Character

As the epitome of "goodness" in this story, Gerda may seem terribly Victorian to modern readers. The reader learns to expect only the best behavior from her, and is impressed with her goodness and kindness to all, especially her consideration for the grandmother. The patience and forgiveness Gerda shows to Kay, and her gratefulness to those who help her, endear her to the reader for her goodness. That wickedness is personified in the story by Kay's "cruelty" to roses and animals and his bad manners toward his grandmother, and by the little robber girl's rudeness, greed, and cruelty to animals can probably be attributed to Andersen's desire to present evil in terms that children can understand rather than to any intense devotion to puritanical notions of the proper behavior of Victorian little girls and boys. The robber girl, a symbol of everything that little girls should not be in behavior, has after all redemption in her gruff charity to Gerda that springs from a basic nobility of character. The Snow

Queen, with her fantastic beauty, hypostatizes the real evil in the story, for the greatest evil lies not in behavior but in hardness of heart. One should probably not pass up the excellent minor characters in discussion of this story. In contrast to the characters in the old folk tales, the characters in Andersen's stories are drawn very sharp, in Dickensian fashion, to illustrate brilliantly some particular characteristic.

Style

The descriptions found in "The Snow Queen" are filled with vivid detail as well as fantasy. The attic homes of Kay and Gerda are easily visualized, as are the dormer windows, the large window-box, and the pea vines hanging over the edges of the boxes. Ten- and eleven-year-old boys and girls will enjoy the description of the strong, black-eyed, melancholy little robber girl. The description of the robber's castle presents a picture of mystery and fear: the cracked walls, the big fire in the center of the room, the cauldron of soup, and the ravens and bulldogs. Andersen's descriptions represent a fusion of precise perception, folktale description, and "Gothic" descriptive detail.

Besides the fullness of description in his stories, Andersen departs from the simplicity of the "folk" fairy tale in his excellent use of figurative language. Much of the symbolic effect of the details in his stories depends upon the personification of animals and inanimate objects. The "pathetic fallacy" pervades the stories, but the assignation of emotions to inanimate things does not mar the story because the mood of magic has already been established. One of the first examples of personification occurs at the beginning of Gerda's long search for Kay. To the river is attributed the ability to accept or reject the offering of Gerda's prized possession--her red shoes. Following this incident is another example of personification in reference to Gerda's red shoes. It appears as though the shoes feel sorry for Gerda as she sits in her stocking feet crying. The shoes drift behind, "but they cannot catch up." The reference implies that the shoes are capable of emotion. To the flowers, the roses and tiger-lilies, is attributed a capacity for speech and knowledge, for they speak to Gerda and answer her question on whether Kay is dead or alive.

"The Snow Queen" includes a number of examples of repetition as a structuring (as well as decorative) device. Verbal repetition is especially apparent in the episode that takes place in the flower garden of "the woman who could conjure." The series of adventures that Gerda encounters parallel each other in structure as well as in language. Gerda begins each episode with high hopes that she will find little Kay; but she always encounters obstacles and discouragement, and at the episode's end Gerda steadfastly is pursuing little Kay on another journey into the unknown.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. The teacher might prepare the class for "The Snow Queen" by telling them that the story they are about to hear is "like" the fairy tales that they have studied before, but "unlike" folk tales in that this story was written by a particular author. Many of the children will be familiar with a number of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales. Ask the children to try to notice ways in which this story is similar to and different from other fairy tales they have read.

II. Andersen's "The Snow Queen" may be read orally by the teacher or silently by the students if copies of the book are available to all. The story is divided into seven separate tales, so each one can be taught as a separate lession, whether it be read by the teacher or read silently by the students.

III. Discussion should probably take place immediately after the reading of each section of the story. Try to encourage the students to recognize and understand the elements of the story discussed in the Background Information section as the story develops. They should be able to recognize the structural motifs, and they should be able to make some verv simple analyses of the symbolism in the story. They will not, of course, be able to make a very complete interpretation of the story until they finish it. The teacher must be careful to encourage interpretive analysis by the students; she must in no way force her interpretation on the students or force them to perform analyses that they are neither capable of performing nor interested in. The vocabulary is quite complex, and the teacher should probably spend some time with it either before or after the reading of each section, but she should not spend a disproportionate amount of time on vocabulary development or in any way turn it into a drill.

Following are some questions suggested for the guidance of the discussion of each part of the story. The teacher will, of course, feel free to add questions as opportunities arise or to eliminate questions according to classroom situations. It is especially important with stories of this nature that operate on several levels of meaning that the teacher not question students to the extent that the questioning detracts from the enjoyment of the story.

A. The Mirror and Its Fragments

1. How are you certain that this story took place in fairyland?
2. What do you think the mirror stands for?

B. A Little Boy and a Little Girl

1. What does it tell you about these two families when the story describes the beautiful flowers that grew in the attic gutter?
2. What change was made in Kay immediately after he got the splinter in his eye and in his heart?
3. Why couldn't Gerda see the splinter in his eye?
4. Can you think of a reason why Kay could not repeat "Our Father" when he became frightened?

C. The Enchanted Flower Garden

1. What shows Gerda's devotion to Kay?
2. What do you think is the importance of the old woman's leaving the rose on the hat?
3. Why do you suppose it was cold, grey, and sad outside the garden?

D. The Prince and the Princess

1. Can you think why the author made it difficult for the raven to understand Gerda's language?
2. How was the splendor of the castle described to Gerda?
3. Where in this chapter did Gerda show that she was "good" and had a very conscious feeling of right and wrong?

E. The Little Robber Maiden

1. How do you think Gerda felt as she spent the night with the robbers?
2. What shows the evil of the robber maiden while she was still being helpful to Gerda?
3. How is passage of time shown in the story--or is it shown?

F. The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman

1. Why do you think the Lapland woman told the reindeer that she could not give Gerda what "she did not already

have?" What was it that Gerda already had?

2. Why did Gerda have so great a power already?
3. Why did angels appear when Gerda said the Lord's Prayer?
4. How does the description of the robber girl make you feel that she was evil?
5. Why do you think the snowflakes had such ugly shapes? Why did the steam from Gerda's mouth when she said the Lord's Prayer have the shape of angels?

G. The Snow Queen's Palace

1. Why do you suppose Kay could not feel the cold even though he was almost black with cold?
2. Even though Kay could form many words with ice, why do you think it was impossible for him to form "Eternity"?
3. Why would Gerda's tears melt the ice in Kay's heart?
4. Can you explain why everywhere Kay and Gerda walked it was spring?
5. Why was everything that Gerda did good?

Composition Activities

I. Ask the students to write some paragraph descriptions of various characters in the story, paying some attention to details of appearance, using diction as specific, particular, and expressive as possible.

II. Ask the students to write some imaginary dialogues between the characters of the story. Ask them to try as hard as they can to make the dominant characteristics of the characters apparent through what they say.

III. The children may like to attempt a "fairy-fable" similar to "The Snow Queen." They will recognize the fact that they will probably want to use the devices of the folk tale (devices of the common plot motifs, the stock characters, magical elements, etc.) and at the same time the general symbolic method of the fable, "teaching a lesson."

The teacher must help fifth graders plan such stories very carefully, since the process of beginning with an abstraction and attempting to objectify it with particular characters and actions is a relatively difficult, abstract process. The children should probably first think of a "moral" that they wish to exemplify (perhaps they might have some fun by starting with some of the sayings of Poor Richard in The Golden Treasury of Poetry) and then "discover" characters and plots that will dramatize the moral. Most of them will find that they naturally choose at least two characters who represent direct opposites: good and evil, wisdom and foolishness, gentleness and hardheartedness, generosity and miserliness, etc. In their plot structures, most of the students will wish to plunge their heroes into desperate circumstances alone, away from home and friends, circumstances from which they may be rescued either by their own wit and intelligence or by the intervention of some supernatural being. At any rate, the triumph of the hero over his adversary will point up some kind of moral lesson. The teacher should exercise some care in assisting students with plot outlines and/or general conceptions of characters before the students get too far along in the writing. Careful preparation will prevent a good deal of the wandering "formlessness" apparent in many stories.

Language Explorations

I. Diction

The children may devise some charts to compare the characters in the story that represent good to those that represent evil. Ask them to list on the chart the particular words that are used in reference to each character that make them appear either good or evil. They might culminate their chart with the events, or "actions," of the characters that dramatize the good or evil characteristics that they noted with the particular diction.

II. Punctuation

As the children read the story and write imaginary dialogue, they will naturally be interested in the punctuation of "speech." This will be a good opportunity to review the use of quotation marks, and to teach the use of other marks of punctuation to indicate intonation patterns.

Extended Activities

As an activity for "The Snow Queen," the students could present a puppet show. The class could be divided into committees, with each group working with a separate tale. The students could write their own script for the show. The abundance of characters would give everyone in the class a chance to take part.

POETRY:

Robert Browning, "The Pied Piper of Hamlin"
The Golden Treasury of Poetry

(Most children enjoy this excellent poem by Robert Browning based on a persistent folk legend. Whether the piper represents an evil power, spiriting the children away to an evil fate after the fashion of the Snow Queen's abduction of Kay; or whether the piper leads the children to a perfect heaven designed just for children is a matter of some critical disagreement. But the children will enjoy the telling of the tale in any case, since it is one they have probably "heard of" frequently but never really "heard.")

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The Children will be interested in other tales by Hans Christian Andersen. A few of the better ones are listed below:

"The Nightingale" (False standards of society)
"The Emperor's New Clothes" (Humorous satire)
"The Girl Who Trod on a Loaf" (Sin)
"The Princess and the Pea" (Satire)
"Great Claus and Little Claus" (Droll humor)
"The Wild Swans" (Almost perfect outcome)
"The Swineherd" (Satire)
"What the Good-Man Does Is Sure to Be Right"
"The Tinder Box" (Retelling of the folk tale, "The Blue Light")
"The Ugly Duckling" (Parable)
"The Little Fir Tree" (Read at Christmas time)

William Pène Du Bois, Twenty-One Balloons (New York: The Viking Press, 1947).

Unit 48: Fanciful Tale:

THE LION, THE WITCH,
AND THE WARDROBE

FANCIFUL TALE:
THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE

CORE TEXT:

C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

The fanciful has come to be regarded with suspicion in recent times. In our quest for hard facts, for finding out the secrets of nature, for getting everything straight and clear, we are sometimes inclined to regard departures from the field of scientific knowledge either as trivial or as false. And if we value intuition or imagination for their uses in scientific discoveries, we often join Coleridge in distinguishing between imagination as the creative, shaping power and fancy as the decorative one. Decoration has become unfashionable; we require our beauty to be functional in order to be comfortable with it. Gew-gaws are dust-catchers, and they are phony.

This state of affairs is probably partly a result of mechanized production. One cannot get machines to make attractive fanciful designs. The claw-feet of most late Victorian chairs are quite naturally masterpieces of ugliness, since they were turned out by machines and machines are incapable of variety, spontaneity, and freshness. However, as long as people have these qualities, there is a place for fancy in their world. If buildings can no longer be fanciful without being grotesque because we no longer have enough craftsmen in store to decorate them, literature has not yet reached this point.

There are many writers of fantasy for children, not so much because fantasy is really childish as because too many modern adults are incapable of enjoying it without feeling guilty. C. S. Lewis is one of the relatively few fanciful authors of our day who has not given up on grown-ups. It is to be hoped that more authors will follow his lead, not only because of the charm of the fanciful, but also because there are aspects of human reality too delicate and complex for the laboratory but accessible to the imagination and the fancy. The exposure to fanciful stories of high quality in childhood may help students to retain the ability to enjoy and learn from the fanciful in later years.

This unit is closely related to the sixth-grade fanciful tales, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and A Wrinkle in Time. The three stories share an attitude of respect for the intelligence and values of children, rather complex patterns of symbolism, and great tact in presenting their themes. All three depend heavily on literary and social traditions and assume the reader is rather sophisticated in such matters. The earlier units in the "fanciful tale" series will have prepared the students to enjoy the freedom and lightness of C. S. Lewis' treatment of fantasy. The fables the students have read, especially *Chanticleer and the Fox* (third grade unit) and *The Fables of Aesop* (fourth grade unit) will have introduced the students to the use of animals in the presentation of virtues and vices. Heroic stories such as those about Theseus and "Leif the Lucky," encountered in Grade 4, will be useful background for an appreciation of the heroic elements in this story. This unit should prepare children for a better understanding of the sixth grade "myth" units, *The Children of Odin* and *The Hobbit.* It will also be helpful to them in numerous secondary units deeply concerned with the Christian tradition, especially those treating allegorical works.

The objectives of this unit are (1) to increase the students' ability to appreciate fantasy; (2) to introduce students to a more complex and exalted use of fanciful techniques than they have met before; (3) to widen students' acquaintance with the traditional literary and rhetorical conventions used by Lewis, in order to prepare them for understanding more complicated uses of these extremely common conventions of Western literature; and (4) to present the students with a delightful and well-written piece of literature.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

Author

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) was a Fellow at Oxford and professor at Cambridge, one of the first modern scholars of medieval thought, an eminent Christian apologist, and a prolific author. His works include *The Allegory of Love*, a study of "courtly love," *The Screwtape Letters* (exchanged between a young devil and an old, experienced one), *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Till We Have Faces*, and many other imaginative novels, including *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.*

Like many other children's books of the highest quality, this one was written for a particular child who was a friend of the author, Lewis' daughter Lucy. It was written during the difficult period following World War II in Britain, not as escape literature but as literature providing contact with the deep resources of the spirit for dealing with such periods.

Genre

This story is fanciful in genre as well as in substance. Although it somewhat resembles the Alice stories (in being a novel of a journey into a wonder-land where adventures prove the virtues of the main characters), and although both this story and the Alice stories occur within the framework of the dream-vision convention, C. S. Lewis and Lewis Carroll wrote very different books.

Some children may recognize the similarities between the two writers. The teacher should comment favorably on the perceptiveness of such an observation, but should not encourage a lengthy discussion of it, as this might weaken the impact of the sixth grade unit on Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. It might be noted here that while Carroll emphasized modern manner, ideas, and customs in a satirical way, judging them against the standard of a clear-eyed, level-headed child's perceptions, C. S. Lewis emphasized traditional virtues, and judged his child-characters against a heroic animal character who embodies those virtues. Carroll wrote a satire on the Victorian world, while Lewis has written about a quest in the Christian world.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe consciously makes use of the conventions of older Christian literature, mixing allegory with fable, monsters with vices (in the sense of grotesque characters exemplifying vices), children with knights, Celtic with Germanic folklore, the modern with the medieval world. The mixture does not fuse into a new thing--Coleridge would have called it fanciful, not imaginative. Nevertheless, it is a delightful mixture. Its elements do not clash, for all of them have been constantly used in the service of an overriding set of values so that they are all marked with it, and Lewis maintains both the varied richness of his elements and their Christian stamp.

Structure

Although the story consists of an adventurous journey into danger, it is a shared journey, not an isolated one. The heroes and heroines are united with the community of the virtuous in the World Behind the Wardrobe. Isolation in this story comes from cooperating with evil, and Edmund's isolation is not attractively adventurous, but a painful and ugly state of sin, from which he cannot be rescued except by a great sacrifice on the part of a savior.

The forces of good and evil are the major structural elements of the story. The inhabitants of the strange world are divided into two camps, each representing one side of this struggle. The children are (structurally) human souls whose entry on the field of battle is necessary (but not sufficient) for the victory of good. There is little sentimentality in Lewis' view of the conflict. It is a real battle. Although the good is more forceful, more awe-inspiring, and more vital than the evil, it is also harder to understand, and evil is by no means weak.

Theme

The theme of the story centers around Christian redemption as necessary to successful living for individuals and to the full life for society. Aslan is a transparent figure for Christ, both in his death for Edmund's sake and in his bringing spring to the country he travels through. The Witch represents evil, and evil is seen as a freezing force, as a bringer of death. Reaching maturity consists of choosing life rather than death--it is not a matter of years, as the conclusion of the story shows.

Style

The style is grandfatherly in the best sense, so urbane and sophisticated that it can speak of the most serious matters clearly and without pomposity or condescension to a child. Lewis has tried for a medieval freshness and joy in his descriptions of nature, and succeeds about as well as one could expect a modern writer to do. The teacher should recognize the lightness of touch in didactic passages, and read them as tactfully as they are written.

Character

Like most allegorical characters, the ones in this story are not highly individualized. They portray traits that any person might have. The four children exhibit a wide range of the moral possibilities of childhood. In a more realistic story, all four might be combined into one more complicated hero or heroine, and psychological and physical idiosyncrasies might be more important. The minor characters are even more allegorical than the major ones. The beavers typify folksy, domestic virtues; the wolves stand for rapacious, unthinking violence, and so on. This story is written at a deeper level than the psychological one. It deals with the soul, not with the personality. Since the soul is infinitely complex, it is usually, as it is here, drawn in fragments. Each trait is a character, but all the traits are in every soul--to some extent, at least. So the reader's response to any one character is likely to be very simple, but the response to all the characters is likely to be very complicated.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. To set the scene for the reading of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the teacher might show the picture of the house included in Chapter V and ask this question: Have you ever seen a very large house, much larger than the one you live in, and thought you'd like to explore all the rooms?

A brief explanation could be given to establish the location, near London; and the time, during World War II.

The teacher might also discuss with the children some of the stories that they have read or heard that have talking animals as characters.

II. Skillful reading of this book is, as always, important (see also the Background Information section, remarks on "Style"). The teacher may wish to read two chapters at each session, since they are short.

III. Discussion may follow each reading session; possible topics follow:

Chapters I and II

1. Where do you suppose the author got the idea of using the names "Son of Adam" and "Daughter of Eve"?
2. What does Tumnus think Lucy is talking about when she mentions "wardrobe" and "spare room"?
3. What time of year is it on each side of the wardrobe?
4. The faun played the flute to cast a spell over Lucy. Have you ever heard of another flute-player who cast a spell over children? (Pied Piper)
5. How did the author describe the music? Do you remember the two pairs of opposites he used? (Laugh and cry, dance and go to sleep)
6. What is meant by "The faun was in the pay of the White Witch"?
7. Why is she called the White Witch? (It is not because she is good as children might assume, but because she is white in appearance and because it is always cold and snowy when she is around.)
8. Do you think the white handkerchief will be mentioned again in the story? Why?
9. What story were you reminded of when you learned the White Witch turned living creatures into stone statues? (King Midas)
10. What does the Faun tell Lucy about Bacchus? Have you heard about Bacchus before? (He appears in the story of King Midas.)

Chapters III and IV

1. What foolish thing did Edmund do when he entered the closet? Why was this a foolish thing to do? Has this been mentioned in the story already?
2. Why do you think the White Witch suddenly acted nice to Edmund?

3. What magic did the Witch perform? What is Turkish Delight? How did it affect Edmund?
4. What rule of good manners did Edmund decide to forget about?
5. Why do you suppose the Witch said, "He's only one," and and asked, "You're sure there are just four of you?" (The children can't really know the answer yet.) Do you suppose this will be important in the story later on?
6. How did the Witch flatter Edmund? Why did she do this?
7. Would you like to live in a place where it is "always winter but never Christmas"? Give several reasons why, or why not.
8. What kind of a boy was Edmund? How would you describe him? (selfish, greedy, etc.)

Chapters V and VI

1. How does the author build up to the fact that Edmund let Lucy down? (The teacher may wish to reread parts of pages 35-37).
2. Why do you suppose Edmund is becoming nastier every minute?
3. What words would you use to express this idea: Edmund has always liked being beastly to anyone smaller than himself. (Picking on, bullying, etc.)
4. What are the three possible reasons the Professor gives for Lucy's behavior? Which reason, according to the Professor, is the right one?
5. Do you agree with the statement, "If things are real, they're there all the time"? Give reasons for your answer.
6. How does the Professor explain the fact that Lucy was gone less than a minute?
7. Does the Professor believe in other worlds?
8. What do you think the Professor wants children to be taught in school? (to use imagination) How important do you think one's imagination is? (The children will probably realize that they enjoy many things and situations imaginatively. Then you might ask: Doesn't a scientist or an inventor first have to imagine an answer for his problem before he can work out an invention to solve it?)
9. What do you think about the plan the Professor suggests--minding one's own business? Is this an easy thing to do? Why or why not?
10. Why did Lucy think it might not be wrong to take the coats?
11. How did the children find out Edmund had been in the woods before?

12. Why does Edmund try to make Peter doubtful about Robin's being on the right side?

Chapters VII and VIII

1. Whose side are the trees on? (Some are on each side.)
2. How is the beaver able to prove he is on the right side? (Handkerchief)
3. When they hear "Aslan is on the move," how does it make the children feel? Do they know who he is?
4. Remember how modest Mr. Beaver acted when they looked at his dam? Have you ever acted this way when someone praised a picture you'd drawn or a story you had written?
5. How did the snow help them to escape?
6. What legend does the Beaver tell about in the rhyme?
7. Why has Edmund betrayed the others?

Chapters IX and X

1. How did Edmund feel toward his brothers and sisters? (He didn't want them turned to stone, but neither did he want them treated as well as he wanted himself to be treated.)
2. Because Edmund is not on Aslan's side, he tries to talk himself into thinking that Aslan is awful. This attitude could be called "sour grapes." What fable does this remind you of? ("The Fox and the Grapes")
3. Who is Fenris Ulf. What does he mean when he calls Edmund a "fortunate favorite . . . or not so fortunate"?
4. How does Mrs. Beaver feel about leaving her sewing machine behind?
5. Who does the man on the sleigh remind you of? What is he called in this story?
6. How did Father Christmas manage to get into Narnia? (Aslan is on the move, and the Witch's magic is weakening.)

Chapters XI and XII

1. What is Edmund served when he asks for Turkish Delight? Why do you suppose the author used an iron bowl and iron plate instead of glass or china ones?
2. Why does Edmund wish this had been a dream?
3. Do you think Edmund is going to change? Why? ("And Edmund for the first time in this story felt sorry for someone besides himself.")
4. Why has Spring come, at last, to Narnia?
5. Why does the flood seem so wonderful?
6. How did the moss feel under the children's tired feet as

they were walking in the forest?

7. How does a lion or a cat "velvet its paws"?
8. What is said in Narnia about "kissing" and "crying"? Do people in our country feel the same way about this? Do you think we should feel this way?
9. What ceremony is used when Peter becomes a knight? Where have you heard about this ceremony before?

Chapters XIII and XIV

1. What is the "proper use" of the Stone Table? (for sacrifices)
2. How did the White Witch and the dwarf disappear? What did they become?
3. What is the legend of the Deep Magic?
4. How do you think Aslan persuaded the witch not to kill Edmund?
5. Why do you think Aslan is sad? Why do you think Aslan permits them to tie and muzzle him?

Chapters XV, XVI and XVII

1. How far back in time did the Deep Magic go? How far back did the Deeper Magic go?
2. What does Death start to do?
3. How did Aslan make the statues come back to life? (How is this different from the way King Midas brought Marigold back to life?)
4. What comparison is used to tell about the size of the handkerchief? (It was the size of a saccharine tablet to the giant.)
5. Was Edmund a hero? Why? Was Peter also a hero? Why?
6. What made Edmund well again?
7. Did Edmund ever learn about Aslan's bargain with the Witch?
8. What happened to Aslan at the last of the story? (He just slipped away quietly.)
9. When the children were in Narnia, did their other world (the real one) seem real to them? How did it seem?
10. How did the children's style of speaking change after they became Kings and Queens?
11. What time was it when the children returned?

Composition Activities

I. The children might enjoy writing about an imaginary experience in a big old mysterious house.

II. Read the second paragraph on page 22, calling attention to the effectiveness of the short sentence, "He shivered." Have the children write a paragraph about some incident in the book using one short sentence to achieve a similar kind of effect. For contrast, they should have at least 3 or 4 longer sentences in their paragraphs.

III. The White Witch asks Edmund, "What are you?" How would you answer if a strange creature, not a human being, asked you this question? Write the explanation you would give.

IV. Children might like to make up a legend, then try to write it in a verse form similar to the ones on page 64 and 65. (Some may prefer to write their legends in paragraph form. Do not insist they write poetry!)

V. Write the sentence on the board from Chapter IX, page 73, where Edmund goes slipping, skidding, tripping, sliding, and so on. Have the the children see how many -ing words they can include in a sentence. The children may use the above sentence as a model, but their sentence should be more than a mere substitution of words. The context should be different also.

VI. (This suggestion should be used immediately after Chapter X is read.) Write a story telling how you think the Christmas gifts will be used.

VII. Read this sentence to the children: "It seemed to be all towers; little towers with long, pointed spires on them, sharp as needles. They looked like huge dunce's caps or sorcerer's caps." (p. 74) Ask them to try to think of other comparisons which could have been used to describe the towers or other building, place, scene, etc.

VIII. When Aslan talked to Edmund, what was said was a secret. The other children never learned what was said. Have the class write the conversation which they think took place between Edmund and Aslan. Have the conversation end with Aslan saying, "Here is your brother--there is no need to talk to him about what is past."

IX. (After Chapter XV) Have each student write a paragraph telling about a fast ride he has taken. (Horseback, sledding, roller-coaster, airplane, etc; discourage stories about speeding in automobiles.)

Language Explorations

I. After Chapters I and II

Some of the words pointed out in the vocabulary lists may need to be written on the board and defined, while others, such as slang expressions and coined words, may be singled out and commented on just for fun.

1. Vocabulary:

    inquisitive
    mantelpiece
    jollification
    old chap
    neat little pair of tongs

2. What is the difference between a faun and a fawn? Could these words be called homonyms?

II. After Chapters III and IV

1. Vocabulary:

    sulking
    sledge
    champing
    dominion
    mantle
    jolly good hoax
    batty, quite batty
    has really taken us in
    snappishly
    heather

2. What words in this sentence rhyme: "Edmund sneered and jeered at Lucy." Are the words similar in meaning?

3. The words mantle and mantel are easy to get mixed up. It might help you to remember which is which if you think of this picture:

    The fireplace mantel ends in tel. Think of the t and l as tall candles and the e as a short vase. Then think of the arrangement which would look best on the mantel.

III. After Chapters V and VI

1. Vocabulary

    savagely
    logic
    occupant
    premise
    larder

2. Call attention to the British spelling of these words: apologise, recognise, realise, fraternise.

3. What words would you probably use to say "the former occupant of these premises"?

4. What does "made an enchantment" mean?

IV. After Chapters VII and VIII

1. Vocabulary:

modest
stratagem
betrayed
treacherous
decoy

2. What is meant by the expression "time out of mind"? (long ago--before one can remember.)

3. Talk about the difference in meaning of "going to be," "used to be," and "ought to be" in Mr. Beaver's sentence in Chapter VIII, page 66.

V. After Chapters IX and X

1. Vocabulary

sorcerer
lithe
eerie
solemn
sluice gate
plaguey fuss

2. What does the prefix un- mean? Here are two words from the story--unbrushed, uncombed. How many more un- words can you think of?

3. What words are used as opposites in this sentence: "Nothing spoils the taste of good ordinary food half so much as the memory of bad magic food." What does the sentence refer to?

4. What words could be used in place of "reckoned" in this sentence: He hadn't reckoned on this. (figured on, counted on, expected, etc.)

5. The words "tired and pale" are not usually used to describe a voice. What are some other good words which might be used to describe a voice?

VI. After Chapters XI and XII

1. Vocabulary

gluttony
self-indulgence
councillor
by gum
pavilion

2. Reread the description of the running water on page 95. On the chalk board make a list of the excellent descriptive words used. See if the children can add similar words to the list.

VII. After Chapters XIII and XIV

1. Vocabulary:

traitor
appeased
perish
assaulting
despair

2. How would you probably express the following ideas?

   a. messenger who craves audience (wants to be heard, would like to report to you)
   b. desires a safe conduct (king's X, guarantee of safety)
   c. of all the cheek (how saucy, how impertinent)

VIII. After Chapters XV, XVI and XVII

1. Vocabulary:

prodigious
indigo
valiant
signification

2. Why do you suppose the author repeated a word in each of these sentences?

"[She] could only watch the little short legs of Mr. Beaver going pad-pad-pad-pad through the snow in front of her as though they were never going to stop." (page 83)

"Then he strode to the gate himself and bang--bang--bang went his huge club" (page 140)

3. The children in the story were given the following names:
King Edmund the Just
King Peter the Magnificent
Queen Susan the Gentle
Queen Lucy the Valiant

Can you substitute other adjectives which you think would be just as appropriate?

4. Reread the passage about the fast ride on page 134. Ask the children to listen for the words the author has used to create the feeling of speed.

Extended Activities

I. The class could be divided into several small groups with each group assigned some of the "topics" listed below. Pictures could be drawn or short reports could be given; some childen may wish to do both.

A.
(creatures)
centaur
unicorn
bull-headed man
giants
werewolves
ghouls
boggles
ogres
minotaurs
cruels
hags
spectres
people of toadstools
incubuses
wraiths
horrors
efreets
sprites
orknies
wooses
ettins

B.
(trees)
larches
birches
laburnum
beech
elm

C.
(bushes)
hawthorne
currant

D.
(flowers)
snowdrops
celandine
crocuses
primrose

(Some of the creatures in Part A cannot be "researched." Let the children use their own imaginations to create pictures of the ones they cannot locate.)

II. Pages 150-152 would provide an enjoyable opportunity for a small group dramatization. Children will love to imagine that they are the new Kings and Queens. They will enjoy using regal vocabulary and style.

POETRY:

"True Thomas" — The Golden Treasury of Poetry

John Keats, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" — The Golden Treasury of Poetry

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Bertha C. Anderson, Tinker's Tim and the Witches (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953).

Frances Hodgson Burnett, Secret Garden (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.,1911).

Edward Eager, Knight's Castle (New York: Harcourt, 1956).

May McNeer and Lynd Ward, Armed With Courage (Nashville: Abingdon, 1957).

Roland Welch, Knight Crusader (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960).

Unit 49: Adventure Story:

THE MERRY ADVENTURES
OF ROBIN HOOD

ADVENTURE STORY:
THE MERRY ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD

CORE TEXT:

Howard Pyle, The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1952).

ALTERNATE TEXT:

J. Walker McSpadden, Robin Hood and His Merry Outlaws (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1946). A somewhat easier version of the Robin Hood cycle.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

This book represents perhaps the closest thing to an epic that elementary school students will encounter: it is a tale about a hero, Robin Hood, who with his band of merry outlaws leads the Sheriff of Nottingham on many a chase. Of all the hero cycles, this book is unquestionably the children's favorite. It may not be the loftiest epic; Robin may not be the noblest hero; but his mad escapes, his lusty fights, his unfailing good humor when beaten, his sense of fair play, and above all, his roguish tricks and gaiety come close to defining the word "hero" for children.

The objectives of this unit are (1) to introduce to the students one of the great folk cycles of English literature; (2) to present a story whose theme highlights the concepts of justice and honor; (3) to prepare the student for the detailed study of the epic; (4) to give the students some notions of language evolution; and (5) to give the students the pleasure of reading an exciting cycle of stories.

The selection for this unit is closely related to other units in the curriculum, even though the elementary students may not meet many other epic materials or materials with epic qualities. In addition, the study of the story should prepare students for the study of "the hero" in the eighth grade, particularly for the study of Beowulf and The Song of Roland. It should give them some sense of the purpose of the epic hero insofar as he endeavors to cleanse his society from evil and injustice, a purpose which Robin Hood shares with Odysseus and Beowulf. The Robin Hood cycle is set in medieval England; thus the story also relates to the other medieval materials studied in the curriculum: Chanticleer and the Fox (Grade 3), The Door in the Wall (Grade 5), Norse myth (Grade 6), Arthurian legend (Grade 6), Beowulf and The Song of Roland

(Grade 8), and the history of the evolution of the English language in the medieval period (Grade 8).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Author

The author, Howard Pyle, was born in Wilmington, Delaware. He was best known for illustrations of characters and events in early American history, but he also wrote and illustrated many children's books. This prose version, with Pyle's spirited illustrations, is one of the most exciting narratives in all literature.

Genre

The Robin Hood cycle of stories treats of the single hero and his escapades. His adventures are a series of single adventures, and the order could be shifted about for the greater number without affecting the whole. The whole cycle is framed by Robin's first encounter with the foresters and at the end by his death at the hands of the Prioress. There is some historical progression in the succession of kings--Henry II, Richard I and John--and by Robin being made the Earl of Huntington, but otherwise the adventures are single. Some of the stories do add new members to the band and then these characters figure in later episodes, so that there is a progression in this sense. Yet the thread that binds the stories together is Robin himself. Books like Huckleberry Finn, with the trip down the Mississippi drawing the story together, or A Farewell to Arms with the progress of the war leading from one incident to the next, are quite different from episodic works like Robin Hood or the Odyssey. If we are to look for elements of unity in the Robin Hood cycle, we must find them in matters other than plot--such as stability of characters and singleness of theme.

Theme

The central theme of the book is the difference between legal justice and social justice. Robin Hood and his gay band continually harry their enemy, the Sheriff of Nottingham, by robbing the rich to feed the poor. The minor subject on which the author focuses his eyes is the ambiguous position of the Sheriff of Nottingham, who must capture Robin Hood or lose his position, who must pervert justice to fulfill the law; one feels the ironies implicit in this legal, yet unjust position. Robin Hood's own position is somewhat ambiguous. He became outlawed by his own fault, by rashly killing the King's deer and then more rashly killing the forester. Yet the band that he gathers about him comes "to Sherwood to escape wrong and oppression." The men who band together have taken justice into their own hands after the legal government has failed them. Thus the Sheriff is little pitied since he compounds the vices of the system by enforcing the unjust laws.

Structure

The motifs of Robin Hood are complex and intertwined. The men of his band are outlaws--that is, outside the law. Each has a price on his head; each must shun the company of freemen to protect his own life. With this common bond, they share their isolation from the rest of men and share it "merrily." Thus there is the isolation, but Sherwood Forest must be seen as the miraculous creation of the secure home. The absolute security of Sherwood Forest is made clear by the Bishop of Hereford, after the shooting match before Queen Eleanor:

> "Let him but get back to Sherwood Forest safe and sound, and he may snap his fingers at King and King's men."

Along with the motifs of isolation and security is the perpetual confrontation with the "monster"--the Sheriff. Like Sherlock Holmes' Dr. Moriarty, he reappears time after time to plague Robin. Not until the very end is the Sheriff killed, and then only after a pitched battle. And with this "monster" dead, a "more merciful sheriff" follows.

Pyle's skill shows at its best in his treatment of Robin Hood's tragic end at the hands of the false Prioress. This incident is omitted in most school editions, but it is good that the children read it: the event is honestly and powerfully handled. Older children eventually learn that treachery and death exist, and that nothing lasts in the world but the little legacy of character a man leaves behind. The Prioress, rather more coarsely drawn than Chaucer's Prioress, is the representative of religion gone sour, even as the Sheriff is the representative of the law gone sour. Whatever justice and order exists in the society exists among outlaws living in the Greenwood. The satire implicit here is harsh, but it is perhaps not inappropriate to certain periods in English history, particularly the 15th century. Pyle's primary concern is not with historical or situational satire; it is to suggest that the official instruments of law and religion in society are not always the representatives of justice and good. In an unjust society, Odysseus may be forced to adopt the beggar's guise, and Robin Hood, the robber's.

Character

There are certain outstanding qualities in Robin Hood and his men that are characteristic of the epic hero. Robin Hood has all three of the primary heroic qualities--Courage, Justice, and Control (See The Noble Man in Western Culture: The Making of the Hero, Grade 8). He has both physical and mental courage, the latter especially when he shoots for Queen Eleanor. His whole existence is given its meaning by his quest for Justice, a Justice which is based on Natural Law and not on the gross perversion of that which is the law of his day. After his initial incident with the foresters, he remains temperate and controlled. His last bit of advice to Little John is that John spare the Prioress and the Nunnery--that vengeance not be on his mind. With few exceptions, Robin Hood is a man whose passions are controlled by his reason.

Style

Many examples of good, manly description are found in this book: "Tall was Robin but taller was the stranger by a head and a neck. Broad was Robin across the shoulders, but broader was the stranger by twice the breadth of a palm." The imagery which describes sensory responses is sharp and clear as a pebbled brook: bright and fair colors, joyous songs of the Greenwood, the scent of finely-roasted meats, the feel of fine bows of "Spanish yew," of well-tanned and softened hides--all come clearly to the reader. The style is as clear and fine as a young student could desire.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. Most of the students in any fifth grade classroom will have at least heard of Robin Hood and his band of outlaws in Sherwood Forest even if they have not read many of the tales. The teacher might introduce the book by asking a series of questions to determine how much the children do know about Robin. (Do you know any famous forest in England? What man do we associate with that forest? What was the name of the big man who was his companion? Who was their constant enemy?) Then the teacher could introduce the first episode of the core text as the explanation of how Robin became an outlaw in the first place.

II. The book should be read aloud to the students if possible, partly because the version in the core text is a little too difficult for most fifth graders to read to themselves but mostly because an oral presentation will help to reveal and to preserve the oral folk tradition of the stories themselves. If the oral presentation of the book takes too long, some of the episodes could be assigned to students to read and retell orally to the class.

III. The kinds of questions that might be asked about any adventure are endless. Yet there follow a few questions from the first incident in which Robin became an outlaw and began to acquire his band of followers:

A. When did Robin Hood live? (He died in 1247. The dates for the reigns of the kings during the story are Henry II, 1154-1189; Richard I, 1189-1199; John, 1199-1216.) Where is Nottingham? Where is Sherwood Forest? (Locate these on a map.)

B. What is an outlaw? (Look this up in a dictionary.) How is an outlaw different from an in-law? How much is sevenscore?

C. What kinds of weapons did Robin and his men use? What are gray goose shafts? archers? cudgels? broadswords?

D. Is the Sheriff of Nottingham much like one of our sheriffs? (Originally a "sheriff" was a "shire reeve," an administrator and a justice.)

E. Why was Robin pursued by the foresters? Was it because he broke the law or because he won his bet? Why didn't Robin aim at some other target, like a tree? Did he do right when he just walked away after he shot the deer? Why does he shoot the forester?

F. How much is a pound? How much was it worth in Robin's day? What is a poacher? Why did the other men decide to join up with Robin? What vow does Robin's band take?

G. What does Robin mean by "sport"? Why don't Robin and Little John act more politely when they first meet, saying, "You first--no, after you--no, you first"? What is Lincoln green? Why are the measurements in fingers, hands, heads as well as feet and yards?

Composition Activities

I. The division of the book into twenty-three chapters would allow for committee work for the boys and girls. Each committee could be made responsible for a summary of each chapter. Each could present its summary in any way it wished. The committee could dramatize, read parts orally, or summarize the main points of the chapter. The students could also list the new words found in the chapter and give the meaning and use of each in a sentence.

II. The students could write their own description of Robin Hood. Perhaps the teacher could write this short question on the board and see what remarks students give: "Is Robin Hood a just man?"

III. The students could write characterizations of the main characters. They should list the main characteristics of each and list details that help to develop the character. They could choose almost any character they like: Little John, The Sherrif of Nottingham, Will Scarlet, Robin Hood, or the King.

IV. Those students that have seen a forest might like to compare it to Sherwood Forest.

Language Explorations

I. History of Language

Much of the language, especially the dialogue, of the Pyle version of the tales of Robin Hood reflects an attempt at "Middle English flavoring." One area in which students can begin to gain an understanding of the changing nature of language is in the study of the origins and development of words. The origins of words in the core text are perhaps most interesting in the names of the characters. Names, such as David of Doncaster, Gill o' the Red Cap, Adam o' the Dell, Midge the Miller, and so on, show how people received their names from the locale they lived in, from their trades, etc. The students will find many such names in the story and can trace the heritage or locale of the characters.

This could lead to a discussion of what the children's names might be if they were named after where they were born or what kind of work they might do.

II. Syntax

One of the most significant difference between the language of England in the days of Robin Hood and the English that modern Americans speak is in the greater dependence of modern English upon word order for grammatical meaning. This greater dependence upon fixed word order patterns makes some of the language of Robin's day sound strange to modern ears, and make the listener consider for a moment in order to interpret it properly. Have the children, for example, consider such passages as the following:

A. Shoot each man from yon mark, which is sevenscore yards and ten from the target. One arrow shooteth each man first, and from all the archers shall the ten that shooteth the fairest shafts be chosen for to shoot again.

B. "O Little John!" quoth he, "mine own true friend, and he

> that I love better than man or woman in all the world beside. Little did I reckon to see thy face this day, or to meet thee this side Paradise."

The students should be able to rewrite a good many of the sentences in the core text into "modern English" without much difficulty. They will find the dialogue especially fruitful for this activity.

III. Vocabulary

The differences in vocabulary will be interesting to the students, too. Have them examine unfamiliar words and look them up in a good dictionary to see if they are still in common use. If they are still in common use, see if they have changed in their meanings since Robin Hood's time. Suggested words from several chapters follow.

Chapter 1
cudgel
draughts
venison
bedeck
baste
esquire
quoth
forbear
dextrous
betwixt

Chapter 2
kinsman
warrant
cubits
farthing
friars
quaffing
gin
halloa
bemaul
pate
knave
murrain
pewter
rogue

Chapter 3
wroth
boon
soothe
varlet
fain
yeoman
dais

Chapter 4
constables
Saxon
alack-a-day
plummet
hempen

Chapter 5
blithely
beshrew
tye

Chapter 7
appease
despoil
scabbard
willy-nilly
valorous

Chapter 8
bosky
dun
doublet
tanner
trysting

Chapter 10
spake
prythee
fain
groat
anon

Chapter 11
lamentation
busk
minstrel
albeit
tomtit
awry
dundeer
damsels
pothers

Chapter 12
hermitage
drollery
osier
malmsey
sedgy verge

Extended Activities

Dramatizations of some of the adventures of Robin Hood and his band would enrich the reading of the story and stimulate creative thinking. If well chosen, the dramatizations would emphasize the themes that are discussed in the Background Information (such as the contrast between legal and social justice). Examples would be Robin's meeting of Little John, Robin winning the archery contest at Nottingham, Robin the butcher, Little John living at the Sheriff's, etc.

POETRY:

Both because of the presence of Allan a Dale in the story as a "minstrel" or "balladeer" and because the legends of Robin Hood themselves were originally passed down in ballad form, this unit presents an excellent opportunity to study ballads as poetic forms. The following ballads from the core poetry texts are suggested for use in the unit, along with a very general suggested study plan:

"The Outlandish Knight"
"The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington"
"Robin Hood and Allan a Dale"
"Robin Hood and the Widow's Sons"
"Get Up and Bar the Door"
--from The Golden Treasury of Poetry

"Sir Patrick Spence"
"The Crafty Farmer"
"The Wife of Usher's Well"
--from Time for Poetry

(In addition, the students might be interested in comparing some "literary ballads," ballads written by specific known authors to the "folk ballads." Two poems of this type, written in the ballad stanza and available in the core poetry texts, are John Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" in the Golden Treasury of Poetry and Alfred Noyes' "The Admiral's Ghost" in Time for Poetry.)

I. Establish the background of the ballad.
    A. Discuss the role of Allan a Dale in the story.
    B. Discuss the development of the ballad as a "news medium" in earlier history, pointing out the musical quality of the ballad.

II. Develop an understanding of the ballad form.
    A. Read several of the suggested ballads in this unit.
    B. Point out similarities in the poems through class discussion:
        1. makes use of conversation and dialogue
        2. makes use of repetition (refrains, phrases, words or whole lines)
        3. usually has a hero, villain and supporting characters
        4. story usually involves a feat which brings justice to the oppressed
        5. uses four line stanza, with rhyme scheme abab
        6. the fourth line is usually one "foot" shorter than

the first three in each stanza.

C. Discuss how ballads are different from other poetic forms you have read during the year. Let the children suggest favorite poems to refer to for comparison.

D. If the background in poetry has been well established through the year, it would be possible to attempt a class ballad writing project. Decide on an event in the story of Robin Hood and write the ballad as a class. Don't attempt this stylized form of writing poetry unless the class is eager and receptive and has sufficient background in the study and appreciation of poetry.

If the students show any eagerness for and aptitude for the writing of ballads, they might enjoy very much telling the story of some modern hero, perhaps a traveller in space or even a contemporary athletic hero, in the form of a ballad. Once they master the four line stanza, its iambic meter, and its rhyme scheme, they should be able to manufacture ballads with considerable ease.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Joseph Krumgold, And Now Miguel (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1953).
An account of a boy on a ranch in New Mexico who wants to be considered an adult.

Virginia Sorenson, Miracles on Maple Hill (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1946).
A realistic story of an outdoor discovery for Marly and her brother.

Armstrong Sperry, Call It Courage (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940).
A Polynesian boy overcomes his fear of the sea.

Unit 50: Adventure Story:

ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS

ADVENTURE STORY:
ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS

CORE TEXT:

Scott O'Dell, Island of the Blue Dolphins (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960).

ALTERNATE TEXT:

Philip Viereck, Eskimo Island: A Story of the Bering Sea Hunters (New York: John Day Company, 1962). This story presents the authentic history and legends of Alaskan Eskimo life.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

Island of the Blue Dolphins is an account of a young girl who spent eighteen years (from 1835 to 1853) on La Isla de San Nicolas. The island, 75 miles southwest of Los Angeles, was inhabited by a group of Indians who were taken from the island in 1835 by an American ship after a raid by fur hunters had desolated the tribe. However, just as the American ship was sailing away, the young girl Karana jumped into the sea and swam ashore after seeing that her young brother had been left behind. The story then is her story, for her brother was killed by wild dogs not long after. Karana lived alone on the island until another American ship rescued her eighteen years later.

These are the facts of the story (see also the Author's Note in the Core Text, page 182). Scott O'Dell takes this frame and reconstructs the life of the girl. The story is more than a counterpart to Robinson Crusoe. We are less aware of the ingenuity of the girl or the dangers of her existence than we are of the calm, almost rich, life that she leads on the island. The story is not a triumph over nature, but a triumph with nature.

The objectives of this unit are (1) to bring to the students an adventure story that deals in the main with but one character; (2) to show a hero who is heroic not by swashbuckling, but by enduring against great physical and mental obstacles; (3) to develop the student's awareness of the world of nature; and (4) to present a story that combines fine writing with a compelling story.

Island of the Blue Dolphins exhibits the curiously close kinship between subject matter and theme that so often occurs in books that deal with nature. In such books there is so often an apparent isolation of an individual but an actual recognition of the community and interdependence of all life. This marriage of the subject matter of nature and the theme of the unity of life is especially expressed in a number of the elementary units on myth; in the Grade 1 unit, The Little Island; the Grade 2 unit, Crow Boy; the Grade 3 unit, The Blind Colt; the Grade 4 unit, Little House on the Prairie; the Grade 5 unit, The Door in the Wall; and the Grade 6 units concerning The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Wind in the Willows, and A Wrinkle in Time. The cyclical pattern of life and death in nature is beautifully expressed in Charlotte's Web, subject of a fourth grade unit. The teacher should also know well, if possible, the theoretical background material from the Grade 7 unit, The Meaning of Stories so she will know where a consideration of various levels of meaning should lead the student. The unit builds quite definitely too toward the Grade 10 units, Man's Picture of Nature and Sin and Loneliness.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Author

Scott O'Dell, who received the 1961 Newbery Award for Island of the Blue Dolphins, is not known only for writing children's stories. He is a California historian and a newspaperman. He has written an informal history of Southern California (Country of the Sun) as well as several novels, which again have the Southern California setting. Island of the Blue Dolphins has been made into a feature length movie, released in 1963.

Genre

Island of the Blue Dolphins can be distinguished from other adventure stories by the isolation of the hero. Perhaps a comparison will establish the nature of this particular book: it is like Defoe's Robinson Crusoe in that the hero is left alone on an island for a number of years, but the main difference is that the heroine Karana was a twelve-year-old American Indian girl and not a mature European jack-of-all-trades. She is not shipwrecked like Robinson, but is left on the island which has been her lifetime home. Her existence is, from our perspective, rude, but for Karana the life is a rich one.

Motif

The story of Karana blends a number of principal motifs from children's literature, with several variations. Instead of the journey from home to isolation, Karana is left in isolation while everyone else leaves the home. And in this new isolated home, Karana must confront various monsters: the wild dogs, the giant devilfish, and the otter hunters. But the island which had been home and then became deserted, finally becomes the new home, once again secure. This resolution of the terrors of isolation is climaxed by the taming of the leader of the wild dogs, Rontu. Instead of eliminating the hazards of the island and accentuating the desolation, Karana converts the elements of the island to her way of life. The reader's impression is thus not one of an overpowering loneliness but of a close harmony with nature.

Later, after Karana has known the Aleut girl Tutok, the aspect of the island changes. The elements of nature which had enriched the island for Karana are still present, but the presence of another person has somehow altered the life on the island.

> Below me, Rontu was running along the cliff, barking at the screaming gulls. Pelicans were chattering as they fished the blue water. Far off I could hear the bellow of a sea elephant. But suddenly, as I thought of Tutok, the island seemed quiet. (page 146)

Theme

The theme of this story might have been the glories of nature, that one need never be lonely as long as there is a path to walk on and a sun to shine. But that is not the theme. Island of the Blue Dolphins is the story of a girl who is marvelously attuned to her life of isolation, making the most of the resources of a small island. After the first few years on the island Karana no longer looks for the ship that took her people from the island. Instead she lives with her island: with its beauties and the friend it has provided for her.

When after sixteen years on the island she sees another boat of the white men, she runs to the shore, only to find that the men have left without her because of a storm (page 175).

Every day for the next two years Karana goes to the headland and watches at dawn and at dusk for the return of the ship. And when the ship finally does come, the past days are "all one, a tight feeling in my breast and nothing more." (page 177) She leaves thinking of her "happy days" on the island, but not with great regret. Her birds are chirping in their cage and Rontu-Aru is beside her.

This then is the story of a woman who faces her life as it faces her. She is neither worshipping nature nor rejecting man.

Style

Island of the Blue Dolphins is written in the first person. We are never told any fabrication such as, "This is the diary or record of Karana." We simply have the "I" of the story, but it is an "I" that is remembering, apparently with the whole story of the eighteen years on the island well in hand. But there is no jumping in time. The story proceeds chronologically; no more is revealed than what is present or past. But because of the "I" there is an immediacy and intimacy in the description. Because of the situation of the story--the isolation--there is little dialogue. Instead there is the leisured description of daily life on the island.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. Before reading the story, give the students some idea of the location of the island on which the story takes place, and perhaps of the kind of people who lived on the island at the beginning of the story.

II. Because of the length of the book, after reading several of the early chapters to the class, the teacher might assign one or more chapters to students who are capable readers. The students should be allowed to preare for reading to the class before they actually read aloud. For some of the chapters, the students might even prepare summaries or oral interpretations to present to the class, although such an arrangement must be handled with a great deal of judgment so as not to deprive the majority of the students of the literary qualities of the core text.

III. The teacher should probably discuss the book with the students periodically as it is read aloud in class. She should guide the discussion within the interest of the students to the recognition and understanding of the devices and interpretations considered in the Background Information of this packet. The teacher should not force the students into considerations that they are neither interested in nor capable of, but by the same token she should not underestimate the students' ability to perform simply analysis.

Sample discussion questions follow:

1. How does the author get us to see the island? Do we really know how the island looked? (Bring out the descriptions and the use of repetition in description.)

2. (The following question can apply to most chapters of the book and should get at both the author's manner of description as well as the description itself.) What time of year is it in this chapter? How does the author get us to know it was a certain season besides just saying so?

3. Why does Karana decide to kill the dogs? Why does she save Rontu? Why does she tame the other animals? Why does she want to kill the devilfish (an octopus)?

4. Why does she decide never to kill any more otters, cormorants, etc.?

Composition Activities

I. Read almost to the climax of an episode and then ask the students to write how they think the episode ended. Two such instances might be: (1) Read to where Karana has captured the wild dog: ". . . his yellow eyes followed me everywhere . . ." What happens? (2) After the men from the ship land and a sailor spies her and calls to her (p. 174), what happens? Other such climactic episodes can be selected.

II. Refer to the episode on the island when, after 16 years, white men land. Have the children put themselves in the place of the white sailor who saw Karana and called to her, but did not make contact with her. What kind of story would he have to tell to his friends and relatives, when he arrives back home, about the deserted island where he saw an Indian girl? What would he say about seeing her (how she must have gotten there, what he expected might happen to her)? This can be a highly imaginative situation.

Language Explorations

I. Diction

A. Make a list of the comparisons on the first several pages (they are mostly similes). Have the students discuss how these figures of speech add to the description or the story. Some of them are:
1. ship . . . like a small shell afloat
2. Ramo was . . . quick as a cricket
3. lived so many suns and moons (p. 2)
4. "The sea is . . . a flat stone without any scratches."

B. After they have examined some of the figures of speech that were used in the core text, ask them to fill in the blanks in the following phrases, using the first word that they think of. (The design of the exercise is to have the students furnish standard, trite comparisons. Expected answers are in parentheses.)

1. quick as a __________(wink)
2. hard as a __________(rock)

3. sly as a __________(fox)
4. light as a __________(feather)
5. sharp as a __________(tack)
6. cross as a __________(bear)
7. dirty as a __________(pig)
8. red as a __________(rose)
9. pretty as a __________(picture)
10. flat as a __________(pancake)

C. Have the students compare the "effectiveness" of the similes they found in Island of the Blue Dolphins to the clichés that they have recalled in Part B of the exercise. See if they can discover among themselves the reason for the relative meaninglessness of the trite comparisons--that they are so common that they are simply formulaic and do not call any images, or "mental pictures," to mind. Have the children attempt to make up new objects of comparision for the list of attributes in Part B of the exercise, trying their best to make the comparisons really lively and full of meaning.

II. Style

Select a short narrative paragraph from the chapter you are reading and reproduce it so each child has a copy. "Translate" the paragraph from Karana's first person narration into the third person she. Use this assignment as a basis for the discussion of the first person style as opposed to the third person.

A. Why did the author choose to use first person to tell this story?

B. What kind of stories can best be told in first person? in third person?

C. What kinds of things must we know about pronouns to be able to understand first or third person stories?

Extended Activities

I. Draw some scenes from the book, such as the house of poles and leaves, or the whale bone fence, or Karana in her otter cape and skirt of cormorant feathers.

II. Make a list of all the animals mentioned in the story and have students look up the unfamiliar ones. The sea otter is especially interesting since it is an animal that is now almost (perhaps even completely) extinct. Dana's Two Years Before the Mast has elaborate descriptions of the hunting of the sea otter. Its fur was considered the most luxuriant of all fur bearing animals' (including mink and sable.)

III. Draw a map of the island, using whatever details there are in the story. The shape of the island is given early, though someone might have to look up dolphins to get their shape clearly in mind.

POETRY:

D. H. Lawrence, "Snake" Time for Poetry
(This poem may appear to be too difficult for fifth grade children, but it will not be if the teacher does not insist upon complex erudite interpretation. The imagery of the poem is excellent and the poem expresses skillfully the mixture of loathing and attraction for the snake that must be very close to the feelings that Karana undoubtedly had for many of the wild things on her solitary island.)

Edna St. Vincent Millay, "God's World"
Golden Treasury of Poetry
(This poem should probably only be used with classes that seem to have understood the relationship between Karana and nature on the island. This poem affirms a near-spiritual kinship, an unreasoning worship, of nature, and it should be used probably only as a contrast to the quite rational, equable cooperation with natural forces that is the tone of the Island of the Blue Dolphins.

Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish" Golden Treasury of Poetry
(This poem is notable in connection with this unit for a number of reasons, but especially because of its unsentimental, almost clincial view of a natural object--much the same view of nature that appears in the core text. There is in the poem too a great deal of respect, respect for courage and for a fellow creature's right to live, a kind of respect that Karana has grown to understand.)

BIBILIOGRAPHY:

Elizabeth Coatsworth, The Cave (New York: The Viking Press, 1958).
The story of an Indian boy who conquers his fear through love.

Carolyn Trefflinger, Li Lun, Lad of Courage (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1947).
This story develops the theme of courage in a child.

Johann D. Wyss, *Swiss Family Robinson* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World: first published, 1813).
The dramatic story of a family shipwrecked on an island.

Unit 51: Myth:

BAUCIS AND PHILEMON

CERES AND PROSERPINE

ATALANTA'S RACE

MYTH:
BAUCIS AND PHILEMON
CERES AND PROSERPINE
ATALANTA'S RACE

CORE TEXT:

Rex Warner, Men and Gods (New York: Random House, Inc., 1959)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

This unit is the final unit in the elementary program's series on the Greek myth, designed to help students toward a more thorough understanding of the nature of myth, an understanding extremely important to the more mature study of native Western literature. The myths of this unit, like the others that have been studied in previous units, are stories invented and used by people in the primitive stages of a culture to explain many of the natural and, as they believed, supernatural phenomena that they observed around them. All the myths in this unit should probably not be taught at the same time, but spread out through the school year interspersed with other literature units.

The objectives of this unit are (1) further to enrich the children's background in mythology; (2) to help children understand that our culture is a result of the merging of the influences of a number of civilizations that have preceded ours; (3) to investigate more attempts of ancient men to explain their environment through the creation of myths and legends; and (4) to increase the children's understanding and appreciation of good literature.

Myths are an essential part of a child's literary heritage, a part so essential that, without understanding myth, one can hardly be said to understand native literature. Consequently, to enumerate all the units to which this unit relates would be to catalogue a large share of the literature curriculum. The teacher of this unit should be familiar, however, with the series of elementary units on the myth; and she will particularly find a trilogy of seventh grade units on mythology useful. The series, called Religious Story (Part I: Classical Myth; Part II: Hebrew Literature; Part III: American Indian Myth), furnishes a good deal of the information the teacher of this unit should have if she is to teach the myths with some fullness of understanding. As a part of the same Greek folk literature to which the fables of Aesop belong, this unit is closely related to the first, second, and fourth grade units on the fable. In fact, insofar as the unit takes up stories which imply Greek values of moral idealism, the unit relates to the entire curriculum's consideration of literature as a vehicle for expressing the corruptions of the good life and for expressing imaginatively the essential moral and ethical precepts and assumptions of our culture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Genre

Very simply, myths are stories used by people of primitive cultures to explain their ideas about deities, the origin of the world they live in, and the workings of nature. The principal themes of myths are the creation of the earth and of peoples and creatures, the origin or explanation of seasons and constellations and other natural phenomena, and the origin of social or religious customs. Within bodies of mythology, many of the "origins of things" are the result of punishments or rewards (usually "dealt out" by gods) for vice or virtue (usually exemplified by the actions of human beings). The stories in this unit are all stories of punishment or reward; but each of them, at least incidentally, explains the creation of a plant or animal.

The myths of many cultures are amazingly similar, even though the cultures may be far apart in time and place. Indian, Norse, Japanese, and Greek myths are original with the culture, but the Roman myths were in a large part borrowed from the Greeks and superimposed on the Roman culture. In all these bodies of mythology, the myths are attempts to explain the environment of the people. It was only natural that the mythmakers used the things they could see--the sun, the moon, the stars, the wind, the sea, plants, animals, etc.--to symbolize the forces they believed operated to make things happen to them. The people in primitive cultures generally accepted the literal truth of their mythology, frequently developing it into an organized body of religion.

Structure

All three of the Greek myths in this unit contain vestiges of the nature myths, explaining the origin of some natural object or phenomenon. "Atalanta's Race" explains the creation of lions; the story of "Ceres and Proserpine" describes the origins of natural phenomena in more grandiose proportions--the eruptions of the volcano Aetna, the changing of the seasons, and incidentally the creation of the screech owl. "Baucis and Philemon" may have once explained the formation of two particular trees. Whether these myths started first as nature myths of the pourquoi variety or whether these explanations became additions to other basic stories no one knows for sure; but such explanations certainly are characteristic of myths, not only simply myths like the Indian nature myths but more sophisticated Greek myths like those of this unit.

Students who have had some previous experience with myths, as well as with folk tales and fables, will discover other common structural elements in these myths. The confrontation with a monster and the journey into isolation (in an order reversed from the "usual") is a basic structural device of "Ceres and Proserpine." The students may discover that the contest which is the basis of the structure of "Atalanta's Race" is an outgrowth of the motif of the conflict between the wise beast and the foolish beast so central to the fable genre. The reward for virtuous behavior and the punishment of foolish and wicked behavior in "Baucis and Philemon" is also closely related to the wise beast--foolish beast motif.

The students will find in these myths, however, some elements relatively new to their literary study. First of all, they will notice the "tragic" conclusions in the tales. Though the students may be familiar enough with folk tales, fables, and other myths that end with the death of the "hero" (Little Red Riding-Hood, Charlotte in Charlotte's Web, Arachne, etc.), they have been perfectly able to accept such endings because they are "just or "natural." In most children's stories the good are rewarded and the wicked are punished horribly; but in these stories it may be difficult for some children to see the justice of the conclusions, for those who are punished appear to be good, and the punishment seems to exceed the crime. It may be difficult for some children to understand that the gods really did Baucis and Philemon a "favor" by destroying their home and their friends and neighbors and turning them into trees. The "justice" of the goddess Venus may puzzle the students when they hear of the resolution of "Atalanta's Race " since the fate of Atalanta and Hippomenes seems to come about more because of vengeful anger than because of any action on the part of the human characters. But the children will eventually understand that the very nature of myth is an examination of the relationship between human beings and the gods, and that the greatest sin a human being can commit in a society ordered by the gods is to lack humility and thus fail to indicate a proper respect for and gratitude to the gods. The great importance of showing gratitude for divine favors cannot be neglected in a religious society. The story of "Baucis and Philemon" in this context demonstrates the extent of benevolent protection as well as stern judgment operative between the gods and man in Greek mythology.

Another relatively "new" element in these stories is the extent to which the plots of the stories turn upon a physical attraction between the sexes. An excessive physical passion is the key to the thematic interpretation of the "justice" of the conclusions of at least two of the stories. Many medieval scholars and some modern scholars regard most of the Greek and Roman myths as allegories which continually affirm the superiority of the search for spiritual goods over the search for temporal goods. An excessive devotion to the gratification of worldly desires leads only to tragic destruction. Avarice (the desire for wealth, i.e. "The Golden Touch") and lust (the desire for sexual gratification) are so dominant in these stories because they are two worldly sins that can be demonstrated most graphically in literature. Consequently, many of the most "lurid" stories in classical and medieval literature were actually intended to be the most "moral" and "spiritually uplifting" stories.

Teachers of this unit need not emphasize either such erudite interpretations or the more sordid sexual implications of the stories. The students will probably regard the love situations as natural, just as they have done with "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," etc. But the teacher might be prepared with some answers for those students familiar enough with other myths and folk tales to ask some penetrating questions about the "justice" of the conclusions. "Baucis and Philemon" turns upon a highly respectable love between a man and his wife, and thus may serve as reassurance to those who need a contrast to the rashness of youth in the other stories of the unit.

Character

The characters in these three myths exemplify the most common patterns in Greek mythology. The characters in "Ceres and Proserpine" are all of some order of the immortals--gods, goddesses, nymphs, etc. This kind of myth, treating of the affairs of the gods within their own society, is quite common. The children will note that these gods are like the others that they have met in other Greek myths: they have human thoughts, desires, emotions, motives, sensations, etc. Their relationships are full of the bickering, the jealousy, the intrigues of human society; but their actions are carried out with the use of superhuman abilities. The other kind of story, that involving both mortals and immortals, is also very common in Greek mythology. In such stories, the actions of the mortals frequently parallel the actions of the immortals. There is frequently a contest or a conflict in the human world with human actors that parallels a contest or a conflict in the society of the gods. The gods then take sides in the human contest and give assistance to the human actors according to the sides that they have taken in their own sphere. Although the gods interfere in human conflicts occasionally only to see that justice is done, they more frequently interfere in human conflicts for their own personal aggrandizement. Frequently, then, the human beings tend to appear only as pawns, acting out the roles that fall to them because of the plans and actions in heaven.

Style

The style of these myths does not differ markedly from the style of other Greek myths that the children know. They are characterized by the same concentration on action, by the same tendency to personify natural objects as gods and goddesses or instruments of the gods and goddesses, and by the same grandeur of description when treating of

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the gods and their habitat.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. "Baucis and Philemon"

A. As preparation for the stories, explain briefly that this unit will deal with stories about Greek gods similar to those that the children have heard before concerning the Greek gods and goddesses. If the children indicate any recollection of previous Greek myths, they may wish to recall together some of the things they already know about ancient Greece and Greek mythology. Their discussion might touch on such subjects as:

1. Early Greece (locate on a map) was composed of many parts--mainland and islands--and this explains why there were so many kings and queens in the stories.

2. The Greeks were a very religious and civilized people. They built temples to worship their gods and goddesses. Some of these buildings are still in evidence. Good pictures of Greek architecture may be shown and compared with buildings which the children have seen.

3. In addition to the gods, there were those who had one human and one divine parent. These were demi-gods.

4. When the Romans conquered the Greeks they adopted much of the Greek culture. This explains why, in some myths, the same gods may have different names--one is Greek and the other Roman.

B. Read or tell the story to the class, checking the proper pronunciation of names in a good dictionary.

C. Discussion

1. What two natural phenomena does this myth explain? (a lake and an odd formation of two trees beside a temple)
2. The contrast between the treatment the gods received from most of the villagers and that which they received from Baucis and Philemon may remind some students of the story of Lot and the angels in Genesis 19. The teacher might read this story to the class and then ask what qualities typical of Greek myth appear in "Baucis and Philemon" that do not appear in the story of Lot.

3. What is the first hint that the visitors are gods? (the magical replenishing of food, etc.)
4. Discuss the reasons for having poor people be hospitable in the myth. (the greater value of generosity when there is little to spare, the effect of transforming a cottage into a temple, the Greek distrust of pride expressed through admirable characters who are "humble" in a very concrete sense, etc.)
5. Why were Baucis and Philemon turned into trees instead of into animals or some other thing?
6. In this story, the gods are very generous in repaying the hospitality of Baucis and Philemon, but how does their reward before they die show that Zeus and Hermes have the trait that made Venus transform Atalanta and Hippomenes? Are Zeus and Hermes unfair to the other villagers?
7. Discuss the transformation of the humble home into a temple. Children will probably make the inference on their own that "home" is a happy place when all share willingly. This is not to moralize, but rather to recognize that harmony and sharing in the home is an ancient tradition.

II. "Ceres and Proserpine"

A. Tell the students that this story, like the last, is a myth from the great body of Greek mythology, but that this story, unlike the last, has only characters from the realms of the immortal.

B. Read this story aloud, again checking the proper pronunciation of names in a good dictionary.

C. Discussion

1. What is Etna? (volcano) How does this myth explain the ashes, flames and earthquakes?
2. What caused Pluto to love Proserpine? When do we still use the symbol of Cupid and his arrow (in fun)?
3. Before the kidnapping of Proserpine, what was the climate like? After Ceres realized that her daughter had been stolen what happened?
4. How did Jupiter help Ceres? Why could Ceres recover her daughter for only half the year?

III. "Atalanta's Race"

A. Tell the children that they are about to hear another Greek myth, this one containing both mortal and immortal characters.

B. Read the story aloud, again checking the pronunciation of names in a good dictionary.

C. Discussion

1. Why did Atalanta refuse to marry (or set impossible barriers)?
2. How was Hippomenes able to win the race and Atalanta?
3. Why were Hippomenes and Atalanta punished?
4. Do you think that the Greek gods and goddesses were fair in their punishments and rewards? (Bring out the concept that the Greeks did not worship their gods just because they were always good or fair, but partly because of fear.)

Composition Activities

I. Most of the children will already have written a number of "myths" explaining the creation of something, usually of some peculiar characteristic of an animal, such as "How the Zebra Got His Stripes," or "How the Turtle Got His Shell," etc. Some of the children might enjoy writing more of these stories, this time using Greek gods and goddesses as characters and explaining some natural phenomenon as the result of a contest or quarrel between the gods. Some suggested topics:

Why the Cottonwood Tree is Tall
Why the Sunflower is Yellow
Why the Sumac is Red

II. In order to help children learn to express their own reactions to stories, ask some of them to write a paragraph or two explaining why they might prefer a different, perhaps a more "just," ending for one or more of the myths. Some of the children will better be able to interpret their reactions by creating alternate endings instead of "explaining why" they would prefer some alternate ending.

III. As a group composition activity, the class might enjoy compiling a booklet containing brief "reports" about some of the characters they have encountered in various kinds of myths. Nearly every student could add a favorite character to this booklet, and perhaps even illustrate his report.

Language Explorations

I. Diction

Discuss with the students some of the figurative language in the stories for this unit. Examples:

1. From "Ceres and Proserpine"

   ". . . hair . . . bright as the flame of golden fire . . . ."

   ". . . eyes . . . as black as Pluto's lakes . . . ."

   ". . . like a bird she flew through forest and valley . . . ."

2. From "Atalanta's Race"

   ". . . she stood poised like a graceful white bird about to fly . . . . "

Then ask the children to construct some of their own comparisons, using beginnings such as:

1. Pluto's horses were as black as . . . .
2. the earth became as dry as . . . .
3. the earth became as cold as . . . .
4. Ceres was as angry as . . . .

Most of the children have performed this type of activity many times before, and they might easily fall into the use of clichés and trite comparisons. This time, the teacher should work carefully with the class in order to help them consider *tone* and appropriateness of diction as well as originality. Most of the children will already be aware, for example, that the comparison, "Pluto's horses were as black as *night*" (or *ink*, or *tar*) is not particularly striking. But they ought also to begin to think of some stylistic considerations involved in questions like: "The comparison, 'Pluto's horses were as black as *the inside of a tomcat's ear at midnight*,' is quite striking. But in the context of a myth like those we have been reading, would it be as good as the comparison, 'Pluto's horses were as black as *a feather plucked from the Raven who guards Aetna's innermost dungeons*'?"

II. Syntax

In order to help children recognize the use of a variety of sentence openers, ask them to write sentences with the following beginnings:

"In the wall between the two houses . . . ."
"At nightfall. . . ."
"In low whispers . . . ."
"Far off in the moonlight . . . ."

"Not far from the city . . . ."
"Cruel indeed she was, but . . . ."
"For some time . . . ."
"On their way to the home of Hippomenes . . . ."
"Instead of the palace . . . ."

The children should then examine together the sentences they have written, especially noticing how they could have written the sentences with these elements placed elsewhere in their sentences. They should probably be led to making judgments about how "good," or how "effective" the sentences are in the various versions that they have constructed. Undoubtedly, many of the children will notice that some of the sentences that they have constructed with these sentence openers are "awkward" sentences, but they should reserve their rejection of inverted sentences in favor of ordinary ones until they have placed some of the sentences in paragraphs. Only then will they see that inversion has some value, not only as a way to emphasize a certain portion of a sentence, but also as a way to produce some variety in structure in a series of sentences. One way to illustrate the effectiveness of inversion is to take a paragraph from one of the core stories (for example, the next to the last paragraph in "Baucis and Philemon") and have the children rewrite it in all "simple" sentences with the same syntactic order (subject, verb, object, etc.). Then, comparing the two versions of the same paragraph, the students could easily discover the differences in meaning, interest, and effectiveness created by a variety of sentence patterns.

III. Vocabulary

Ceres is called the goddess of agriculture or farming. In the myth, what happened to the crops while Ceres was grieving for her daughter? Can you think of a food or foods common to our diet whose name may have come from "Ceres"? How many kinds of cereal grains can you name?

Extended Activities

I. Since the text for this unit has few illustrations, the children might enjoy providing some "murals" of their own. Some suggestions:

  A. Pluto rising from the ground in his chariot.
  B. Landscapes showing the earth before and after Proserpine's disappearance.
  C. The cottage of Baucis and Philemon in the process of turning into a temple.

II. Because of the great influence which the Greeks have exerted upon the arts, it is suggested that many pictures of buildings, statues and other art forms of ancient Greece be displayed. Life magazines dated July 5, 12, and 19, 1963, have some very good material to use in this way.

POETRY:

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "A Musical Instrument"
Golden Treasury of Poetry
(This poem will be interesting to the children as an account of how the demi-god Pan created the "pipe," or "flute.")

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Natalia M. Belting, The Long-Tailed Bear and Other Indian Legends (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1961). This is a book of "why" stories for easy reading.

Roger Lancelyn Green, Heroes of Greece and Troy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961).

Thomas Bulfinch, The Age of Fable (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1961).

Edith Hamilton, Mythology (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1961).

These collections by Bulfinch and Hamilton are the "classic" works on mythology. In addition to including fine versions of all the better known myths, in notes and introductions these books contain excellent background information for the teacher.

Unit 52: Myth:

THE LABORS OF HERCULES

JASON

MYTH:
THE LABORS OF HERCULES
JASON

CORE TEXT:

Rex Warner, Men and Gods (New York: Random House, Inc., 1959).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

The legends of the mighty Hercules and his labors and of Jason and the Argonauts in their quest for the Golden Fleece are some of the best-known tales in the history of Western civilization. These stories give children an early opportunity to discover the hero--his qualities, the peculiar way he learns his role and performs his deeds in cooperation with a Providence in mythic literature, and, most important, the ways in which a hero represents a culture. Most of the stories that children have studied in this curriculum have employed a miniscule character as a hero, whether an animal or a child; but the heroic legends of cultural myth and literary epic are usually "real heroes"--men of "epic proportion." Children will be quick to discover, however, that the qualities of epic heroes and miniscule heroes are the same--courage, a sense of justice, control, etc.--and the differences are in degree only. The symbology of the stories is similar in nature if different in kind. That is, the monsters that a Hercules or a Theseus or a Sir Gawaine must conquer may be true monsters rather than ordinary wild animals or natural enemies like blizzards or sandstorms; yet the process of learning right action and acting rightly (symbolic representations of both public and private virtues) is the same in the stories of classical and mythological heroes and of child heroes. Heroic tales have always been and will always be among the most popular and most meaningful delights of youthful readers.

This unit is designed to fulfill the following objectives: (1) to enrich the students' background in myth; (2) to point out some of ancient man's attempts to explain his environment; (3) to increase students' understanding and enjoyment of other art forms; and most important, (4) to enable children to learn and to enjoy the stories of some of the greatest heroes in Western culture.

In the series of units dealing with progressively more complex myths, beginning with Indian nature myths for the first grade and ending with a modern mythical story for the sixth grade, this unit on myths concerning two of the greatest Greek heroes occupies a critical position. The students have been exposed to Greek mythology in the second grade unit on Midas, the third grade unit on Daedalus, Narcissus, and Clytie, and the fourth grade unit on Hiawatha, Theseus, Arachne, and Phaeton. They have also met Greek folk culture in the units on Aesop's fables in first, second, and fourth grade units. In the seventh grade curriculum there is a three-part unit on myth, one section of which is devoted to classical mythology. The teacher will find this unit most helpful as a source of background material for teaching the stories of Jason and Hercules. All of the elementary units mentioned above are essential reading for the teacher who wishes to present any one of them effectively, for they form a carefully planned and integrated series designed to introduce students to the important part of their literary heritage that is myth. Without an understanding of mythic thought and some knowledge of major mythical characters, plots, and motifs, much of the literature of the West is almost inaccessible to a modern reader.

The stories of Jason and Hercules express Greek ideals of right action. They include considerations of the nature of the good life, of the ways in which it may have been corrupted, and of various imaginative expressions of the moral and ethical precepts of our culture--considerations that are a major interest of the entire curriculum.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Genre

Very simply, myths are stories used by people of primitive cultures to explain their ideas about deities, the origin of the world they live in, and the workings of nature. The principal themes of myths are the creation of the earth and of peoples and creatures, the origin or explanation of seasons and constellations and other natural phenomena, and the origin of social or religious customs. Within bodies of mythology, many of the "origins of things" are the result of punishment or reward (usually "dealt out" by gods) for vice or virtue (usually exemplified by the actions of human beings). The myths in a society tend to assert the significant elements in the moral code under which the society operates. Thus, it is a quite natural development in the literature produced by a particular culture eventually to produce "epic" literature--literature in which superior moral behavior and a "proper" acting out of the will of the gods are portrayed in the actions of a single hero or series of heroes. The stories for this unit are stories of that nature, stories which combine mythic elements with legends of heroic deeds.

The myths of many cultures are amazingly similar, even though the cultures may be far apart in time and place. Indian, Norse, Japanese, and Greek myths are original with the culture; but the Roman myths were in large part borrowed from the Greeks and superimposed on the Roman culture. In all these bodies of mythology, the myths attempt to explain the environment of the people. It was only natural that myth-makers personified the things they could see--the sun, the moon, the stars, the wind, the sea, living creatures--to symbolize the forces that seemed to operate in their lives. In very early times, primitive people no doubt believed in their myths as literal explanations of phenomena. Myth and religion were born of the same impulses. Indeed, elsewhere in this curriculum we have distinguished myth as dealing with the spiritual relationship between man and supernatural forces--in Greek myth, between man and the gods; in American Indian myth, between man and the "Great Spirit," etc. Fables, on the other hand, deal with the moral relationships between men. Greek myth evolved ethically and intellectually with Greek civilization, was adopted by the Romans, and has proved its richness and vitality by providing ideas, plots, characters, and symbols for Christian art during 1300 years of post-Roman civilization. The traditional Christian view of Greek myth is that the Greek myth-makers, although pagan, were inspired by God, so that Christians have read classical mythology allegorically as "prefiguring" the Christian era.

If students have heard myths presented in the earlier grades, they will easily recognize many of the typical mythic elements in the stories of Jason and Hercules.

Structure

These stories have a more complex structure than any of the previous myths in the curriculum. The pourquoi and transformation myths of previous units were very simple, or "pure," mythic forms. Even the myths dealing with "heroes" (Theseus, Daedalus) involve only one incident apiece; but Jason and Hercules are involved in several adventures apiece. Since they are heroes (rather than exemplary characters like Arachne [who illustrates pride] or Daedalus [who illustrates skill]), it is essential to the plot that their characters be more complex and more fully developed. With Jason and Hercules, we move from the structure of simple myth to the grander structure of epic. Only portions of their adventures are presented in this unit, but even so, the attentive listener will realize that unity among the incidents is provided by the fact that they are all acts of the same hero. From such a structure it is but a small step to the Homeric epic that opens with "Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles" --the step taken by moving from a single hero to a "single action."

Characters

The myths of heroes deal with the relationships between men and gods, rather than entirely with the actions of either group; but within this general subject, they can be distinguished from the simpler stories in which the gods participate directly in ordinary human affairs. The simplest way to look at a Greek hero is to regard him as a mediator between the gods and men. The Greek gods had human passions and interests. They differed from men primarily by being immortal, superhumanly powerful, and subject to no laws but those of their own natures. Venus, for example, is not regarded as immoral for being a coward or for being unchaste, although Greek myths ordinarily condemn human cowardice and female unchastity. The Olympian gods frequently interfered in the lives of men, and sometimes did so capriciously or even cruelly. Zeus, for example, forbade fire to man, and various deities took strong dislikes to certain cities or families, on which they inflicted all sorts of troubles through many generations.

In dealing with conflicts between men and gods, Greek mythmakers sometimes elevated the human hero of the story to the status of demigod, sometimes regarded him as an especially skilled man or one in some special relation to the gods. An ordinary man probably was thought of as unlikely to dare to challenge the deities and unable to withstand their anger if he aroused it. Considering the terrible punishments the gods inflicted (for example, as a penalty for giving fire to man, Zeus chained Prometheus to a rock, where a vulture ate his entrails every day), it is hardly surprising that the mythmakers attributed extraordinary qualities to men to whom they attributed the courage and strength to face the gods' anger. One explanation of the original purpose of heroic myths is that they served to explain inventions or victories that were obviously desirable to man but that no one man wished to be responsible for because he feared the wrath of the gods. Therefore, we may expect the hero to be less bound to the human moral code than are other mythic characters, for his daring and power place him between man and god.

Of course, the truth about the beginnings of myth is shrouded in prehistoric darkness. The study of how the ancients interpreted their own myths is just beginning, and will no doubt provide more reliable information on the nature and purposes of myth than do most present theories.

Hercules was a demigod and perhaps the greatest and most admired of all Greek mythical heroes. His adventures were legion. Apparently, cities and families not connected with him in early times were inclined to add new episodes to his life, connecting him with themselves in order to obtain the glory of being associated with him and in order to gain his protection, since he was believed to have become a very reliable, powerful, and sympathetic god. (According to legend he was taken into Olympus where he was believed to live as a god.) While he lived on earth he was the greatest of heroes.

His name is thought by some authorities to derive from Hera and cles ("glory of Hera") because it was Hera's enmity toward him that caused him to go through all the trials that exhibited his heroism and made him glorious. Hera was jealous of him because he was the son of her husband Zeus and a mortal woman, Alcmena ("woman of might"). Some say that Zeus decided to father the greatest hero that could possibly be, and that Hercules was the result of this decision and the last child Zeus had by a mortal mother.

The quality of physical prowess has survived as the single most important trait of the hero. Hercules is usually portrayed as a bearded, mature man with a rather serious expression, wearing a lion skin with the head of the beast over his head like a helmet. He almost always carries a club, and sometimes a bow with arrows. Frequently he did battle with his bare hands. Although the Greeks could probably admire strength for its own sake more than we can, Hercules was not merely a strong-man. He protected men from dangers, often in the form of wild beasts, and there is a high sense of honor in the stories about him. Although he was hot-tempered, he was sincerely penitent for his crimes, which were almost all committed in fits of rage or in the spells of madness Hera inflicted on him.

The students will be quick to realize that Hercules' strength was only one part of his heroism. His courage was the other side of the coin--no coward in Greek literature is really strong, although strong men may have numerous faults, such as anger, sulkiness, pride, or childishness. From the opponents of Hercules--the jealous Hera, the cowardly king Eurystheus, the dishonorable men who refuse to give him the rewards they have promised for his services, and the monsters he kills--one may conclude that the hero represents resolution and persistence in the face of unjust or inhuman odds as well as strength and courage. Among other things, he was the hero of struggle and labor, the patron of the Olympic games, truth, travellers and gladiators. His suffering and his eventual triumph may remind students of the modern "Horatio Alger" character, but it should be noted that there is no modern sentimentality about him--he succeeds because he is extraordinary, and his suffering as well as his virtues are clearly connected with his victories and failures. He does not, for example, get rich because he is virtuous, nor is he presented as perfect in every respect.

Jason was the son of King Aeson, who had been driven from his throne by his brother. Like Hercules, Jason had the finest available education under Chiron the centaur. Unlike Hercules, Jason was favored by Hera (in the Warner translation, the Roman names Jupiter and Juno are used for Zeus and Hera). The Argonauts lived a generation before the Trojan War, and the stories are very ancient, older than the Homeric legends.

The great achievements of Jason are of a more strictly social nature than those of Hercules. Jason built the Argo and led the first

Greek expedition by sea to the East. His greatest suffering was caused not by the queen of the gods but by his wife Medea, a sorceress. Although Jason was strong and is portrayed with a Hellenic type of physical beauty, craft was his outstanding attribute--Jason was a skilled politician. His battles were won with the help of human allies, to whom he was not always properly grateful. His lack of loyalty eventually caused his downfall. He is nevertheless an admirable hero, but has not the semi-divine stature of Hercules. Perhaps it is because Jason was not a demigod that his story contains so many elements of warning against hubris (tragic pride) and examples of its punishment by poetic justice.

Theme

The differences in characterization between Hercules and Jason are a good starting point for discussing the themes of their stories. A man cannot discount his human associates, as a demigod may, without being guilty of disloyalty and pride, which bring revenge down on him. Even the greatest human hero must rely on his followers to some extent; and to the Greeks, those who did not recognize this by rewarding their helpers were suspect. Cunning and trickery were admired when they were used as weapons against enemies; but ingratitude to friends was the result of overweening pride and was always followed by disaster. Jason's fall is not included for presentation in this unit because it is terribly grim for fifth graders. The teacher may, however, wish to point out the broken promise in the part of the story that is included and to tell the students that Jason was punished for his ingratitude and disloyalty when a beam from the prow of his ship, the ship that had made him famous, fell on him and killed him. The students will probably see for themselves that Hercules does almost everything for himself, while Jason's friends do a lot of his work for him.

Both series of stories present the value of courage; the heroes meet tests without complaining, even when the tasks are unjustly imposed by enemies. They are eager to face dangers that were very real in Greek civilization--journeys into the unknown parts of the world, conflicts with supernatural monsters and with beings who had supernatural control over nature. Both Jason and Hercules were obliged to serve inferior men who had usurped the thrones that should have belonged to the heroes. But Jason and Hercules accepted the responsibility to struggle that had been thrust upon them, and because of their heroic qualities were able to wrench victory from a game whose rules were not fair. Physical and moral courage, necessary for achieving honor and justice in a very hard world, emerges as the virtue that the students can recognize most easily as the "moral" of the myths.

The glory of adventure will be clear to the students as a theme of heroic myths. They will have no difficulty in recognizing echoes of the Greek admiration for skill that is one of the themes of the story of Jason, as it was of the story of Daedalus. It is quite possible that some students may recognize that these myths also seek to praise justice, self-control, self-sacrifice in the service of the public, etc. Students should probably be encouraged to discuss themes that they see in the stories, but they should not be required to intellectualize meaning before their interest and ability allow them to. These myths are quite complex and will bear as much analysis as student and teacher desire to give them.

Style

The core text attempts to reproduce the stylistic qualities of the best extant classical versions of the myths. The vivid figurative language of these versions is unfortunately not accompanied by attractive illustrations, as is the simpler Price text used for myth units in earlier grades. It is suggested that the teacher remark that the text tries to capture the spirit as well as the words of older versions of the myths in their native language. For fifth graders, attractive reproductions of classical art portraying the heroes would be a great aid toward furthering appreciation of the literary style of the myths. See the bibliography at the end of this unit for sources of such reproductions.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. As an introduction to this unit, the teacher might help the students to recall what they know of Greek gods from the second, third, and fourth grade units on mythology. She might then help them recall the qualities of Theseus and Daedalus, beginning by asking them whom they most admire among the human characters in the Greek myths they have read, and why they admire these characters. She might then ask what qualities one could expect to find in important heroes of Greek mythology. These qualities could be written on the chalk board. They might include skill, courage, generosity, loyalty, piety, etc.

The teacher might then explain that some Greek heroes were human, while others had one divine parent or grandparent, and that this unit deals with one hero of each type. It would probably be a good idea to tell the class that there are many, many stories about Hercules and Jason, and that only a few of these stories are included in the unit.

II. "The Labors of Hercules"

A. Read the story aloud to the students.

B. Discussion

1. Ask the students if they were able to notice any traits Hercules shared with Theseus; with Daedalus; with any of the gods. The parallel traits could be listed on the chalk board.

2. Ask the students to name traits Hercules has that no other character they have read about in Greek mythology has. These traits could also be listed. The table might look something like this:

Traits	Hercules	The Gods
daring	X	
courage	X	
pity		X
skill	X	X
strength	X	
generosity	X	X
anger	X	X

(Many other traits, such as pride, humor, justice, haste in making decisions, disobedience, etc. will probably be suggested by the students. If disagreements arise, they could lead to a discussion of the meanings of various episodes in the story. If such a discussion does not arise of its own accord, the teacher could ask additional questions.)

3. Should Hercules have had to work for Eurystheus when it was Juno who made the hero go mad? Why wasn't Juno punished for the death of Hercules' family? (Two kinds of answers may be expected. First, Juno didn't kill the family; Hercules did it. Second, the gods can do as they please; but men--even demigods--are responsible for their acts.)

4. Why do you suppose the story makes such a point of Eurystheus' cowardice? (To contrast with Hercules' bravery; to make us see how hard it was for the great hero to be a servant, etc.)

5. Why do you suppose the Nemean lion and the Hydra were the first two labors? (Hercules got his weapons in the course of these adventures; the first labor is easily credible compared to later ones and in the second one Hercules has help, so we are led gradually into the more

marvelous stories, etc.)

6. In the fourth labor, Hercules accidentally shot his teacher. He was then alone, for he had killed his family earlier. Why should a hero do such things, even if they are done by accident? (Some children may mention the motif of the journey in isolation; some may think of the biblical injunction to leave home and family, take up one's cross, and follow Christ. One of Hercules' titles in Greek religion was Sotor, "savior.")

7. What are some of the especially difficult things about the labor of the Augean stables? (Some students may know that the Greeks looked down on manual labor, so that Eurystheus' command was insulting to Hercules. Also, the treachery of Augeas in the matter of paying Hercules should be noted.)

8. The sixth and eighth labors deal with the destruction of man-eating creatures. Why should these animals eat men? (Since birds were regarded with some awe, as those who recall the story of Icarus may realize, vicious ones dwelling beside an entrance to the underworld were extremely horrible. It should be recalled that the Greeks believed their souls could not rest unless their bodies were properly buried. These monsters, in short, were more terrible to the Greeks than they seem to most modern readers.)

9. Why does Apollo send Hercules, who has just shot an arrow at him, a boat, when for a similar impertinent challenge Athena had turned Arachne into a spider? (The personal differences among gods and goddesses are less important in this unit than the different attitudes the gods have toward proud human beings as versus valiant, semi-divine heroes.)

10. Where have you heard of golden applies before? (In the story of Atalanta's race.) Can you think of a possible natural object that might have given rise to pourquoi myths about golden apples? (oranges)

11. What do Nereus' tricks remind you of? (transformation myths) How are they different from the other changes of people into things that you have read about? (Nereus transforms himself, not some mortal. His transformations are temporary, not permanent. Therefore, they

do not explain the origin of some object or striking phenomenon, as the transformation myths may once have done.) What virtue does Hercules show in holding on to the changing god? (persistence, courage, fortitude, etc.) How does he react to other gods? (With respect, piety, etc., except when he is angry--then he is violent toward them.)

12. In asking Pluto to restore Theseus to the upper world, what virtue does Hercules show? (generosity, loyalty, etc.)

13. What is Hercules' main fault? (temper, anger, etc.) Is this a suitable fault for a hero? What faults do modern heroes have? (Various answers may be expected--the purpose of the question is to begin a discussion on ancient and modern ideas of heroism.)

14. What familiar elements of myth can you find in this story? (See the discussion of genre above.)

15. How does this story differ from the myths you have heard before? (It is more complicated; its "moral" is harder to articulate; it centers around one man's adventures instead of one event, etc.)

III. "Jason" (NOTE: The selection "Jason and Medea" is not considered to be part of this unit.)

A. Read the first part of the story aloud to the children (the section before "The Voyage of the Argonauts"). Remind the class that these stories are about a human hero, not a demigod.

B. Discussion for this first part of the story might include the following topics:

1. How does Jason's background remind you of Hercules' youth? (They had the same teacher; both of them are separated from their parents; both are strong, courageous, and dressed in the skins of wild animals; both do dangerous deeds at the command of bad kings.)

2. How is Jason's background different from Hercules' background? (Juno is Jason's friend and Hercules' enemy; Jason works with a group, while Hercules usually worked alone; Jason is not a demigod.)

3. What three things does this story explain? (the first Greek ship, the first long ocean voyage to the East, a change in dynasties by conquest) How are these three things different from the things explained by Greek myths you have heard before? (They are social events, not natural phenomena.)

C. Read "The Voyage of the Argonauts" and "The Golden Fleece" to the children.

D. Discussion topics for these sections might include the following:

1. Why is a story of Hercules' loyalty to a boy told right after the story of Jason and the Argonauts' breaking of their promises? (to contrast the two heroes, one noted for cunning, the other for virtue)

2. Would Hercules have exacted an oath from Amycus, or would that hero have killed the bully?

3. What do the Harpies resemble? (the Stymphalian birds) Compare the fate of Phineas with the fate of Midas. What was the "wealth" of Phineas, which he misused, so that the gods punished him? (the gift of prophecy)

4. What natural danger do you think might have started the story of the Symplegades? (perhaps a very narrow strait, or one with treacherous tides, or a whirlpool.) In what sense could Jason have made a safe road forever by passing through these rocks? (perhaps by charting a safe route)

5. When Jason accepts King AEetes' conditions, does he intend to fulfill them, or does he hope for help from someone else? (the latter)

6. When Jason asks Medea to help him, is he being clever, or is he doing an evil deed? (There is something to be said on both sides of this question.)

7. What moral does the myth-maker point out by having the soldiers fight each other? (Even a powerful group must beware of dissension.)

8. From the other myths you have read, would you predict that Jason and Medea will live happily ever after? (probably not)

Composition Activities

I. The class could be divided into small groups which might then tell the story of Jason or Hercules, in relay, to the rest of the children. As the first speaker finished retelling the first part of the story, the next speaker would first summarize what had just been said, then proceed to tell the next part of the story. Each speaker would summarize the part of the story told immediately before his own presentation. This approach encourages children to focus their attention on listening as well as speaking. In making his or her summary each child would include only those aspects of the story told by the previous speaker. If something important had been omitted by previous speakers, this information could be presented by anyone in the relay as part of his presentation, but not as part of the summary. (In this type of activity children are frequently astonished to find that they are often so engrossed in thinking about their own presentation that they fail to listen carefully to the speaker immediately before them.)

II. The students could be asked to write a paragraph to describe or explain some object or phenomenon (a flower, the rainbow, rain, etc.) from:

1. a mythological viewpoint
2. the viewpoint of a scientist
3. the viewpoint of a poet

This assignment could be adjusted in terms of individual differences. Some children might choose only one of the three; others might find it challenging to try all three, using an appropriate style of writing for each.

III. The more able students might like to take the responsibility for doing some research on mythology. Their findings could be combined in a booklet which would become a very worthwhile addition to the classroom library. Possible topics are:

Jason
Hercules
Eurystheus
Ceres
Atalanta
Hippomenes
Proserpine
demigods
Troy
Greeks
Romans
Mount Olympus
Aegean Sea

Language Explorations

I. Diction

The teacher could reread parts of the stories and ask children to listen for words which seem to have connotations of "goodness" and "badness." These could be listed in columns on the chalk board. Children could be encouraged to disagree if they felt a word was placed in the wrong column. A third column might be needed for those words which were defended as having both connotations of good and bad.

Some of the words they might pick out are:

strongest
suffered
hatred
skilled
shame
dangerous
famous
cruel
destructive
freshest
powerful
sin
fit of frenzy
sudden madness
jealousy
purified
brilliant
horror
delightful

II. History of Language

A. Children could consult a dictionary to find the origin of the following words:

cereal (Ceres--Roman goddess of harvest)
helium (Helios--Greek god of sun)
iris, iridescent (Iris--Greek god of rainbow)
vulcanize, volcano (Vulcan--Romand god of the forge)
lunar (Luna--Roman goddess of moon)
fortunate (Fortuna--good fortune)
aurora borealis (Aurora--Roman goddess of dawn)
hypnotize (Hypnos--Greek god of sleep)
calliope (Calliope--Greek-Roman muse of poetry)

B. The students could compile a list of the names of the days and months which were taken from mythology:

Tuesday--Tyr
Wednesday--Wodin
Thursday--Thor
Friday--Freya
January--Janus
March--Mars
May--Maia
June--Juno

Other lists could include:

missiles--Atlas, Jupiter, Saturn, Titan, etc.
flowers--narcissus, amaryllis, iris, hyacinth, etc.
advertising--Mercury, Ajax, Atlas, Mars, etc.

These suggestions could provide the basis for several attractive bulletin boards. The teacher might wish to assign a small committee to work on each of the four topics: days and months, missiles, flowers, and advertising.

Extended Activities

I. Several art projects could be carried on in conjunction with this unit.

   A. One group of students might like to depict the labors of Hercules in a large mural.

   B. Another group might prefer to work individually to illustrate the twelve labors. These pictures could then be arranged sequentially to provide a time-line of the labors of Hercules.

   C. Some children might like to use clay, papier-mâché, or wire to sculpture the obstacles which Hercules had to overcome (lion, water snake, stag, wild boar, etc.)

II. In making the reports suggested in the section on Composition, Part III, students could utilize pictures, maps and charts in presenting their findings.

POETRY:

Lord Byron, "The Destruction of Sennacherib"
Golden Treasury of Poetry
Robert Southey, "The Battle of Blenheim"
Golden Treasury of Poetry

(These two poems might be used as companion pieces to complement the unit and its surface concern for violence and feats of arms. The first poem by Byron uses a very strong metrical scheme to imitate the ferocity of a cavalry charge, glorifying war somewhat in spite of the rather horrifying picture of individual destruction it presents--and pictures of individual destruction are always much more horrifying than pictures of general destruction, since the purpose of presenting an individual example is of course to dramatize horror and bring it home to the reader. The second poem, of course, is a very famous satire of the glories of war--a correction that this unit might need at this point.)

Perhaps the best poetry that could be used with this unit would be the poetic versions of some of the great epic literature of the past. The teacher could read, without too much explanation, passages from the Song of Roland (for example, stanzas 80-92, 104-111 in the Penguin Classics version would provide the students with a taste of the heroism of Roland and his companions), from the Iliad (selections from Book XXII highlighting the combat between Achilles and Hector could be chosen easily from a good verse translation), even from Spenser's Faerie Queene (the most exciting episode for fifth graders would undoubtedly be the battle between the Redcrosse Knight and the dragon, Canto xi of Book I). Tales and legends of great heroes were passed down for centuries in most civilizations primarily in the form of poetry recited orally by poets, or *scops*, or wandering minstrels, or "bards," or whatever they might be called in various societies. Children never fail to be fascinated by these tales, especially when they can have some contact with the oral poetic tradition that preserved them.

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Unit 53: Fable:

BIDPAI FABLES

JATAKA TALES

FABLE:
BIDPAI FABLES
JATAKA TALES

CORE TEXTS:

Bidpai Fables:

"The Poor Man and the Flask of Oil"
"The Crow and the Partridge"
--from Edna Johnson, Carrie E. Scott, and Evelyn R. Sickels, Anthology of Children's Literature, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. and Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1948).

Jataka Tales:

"The Turtle Who Couldn't Stop Talking"
--from Ellen C. Babbitt, Jataka Tales (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1912).

* * *

Since books containing these stories are difficult to obtain, all three stories are reproduced here.

THE POOR MAN AND THE FLASK OF OIL

There once was a Poor Man living in a house next to a wealthy Merchant who sold oil and honey. As the Merchant was a kind neighbor, he one day sent a flask of oil to the Poor Man. The Poor Man was delighted, and put it carefully away on the top shelf. One evening, as he was gazing at it, he said aloud, "I wonder how much oil there is in that bottle. There is a large quantity. If I should sell it, I could buy five sheep. Every year I should have lambs, and before long I should own a flock. Then I should sell some of the sheep, and be rich enough to marry a wife. Perhaps we might have a son. And what fine boy he would be! So tall, strong, and obedient! But if he should disobey me," and he raised the staff which he held in his hand, "I should punish him thus." And he swung the staff over his head and brought it heavily to the ground, knocking, as he did so, the flask off the shelf, so that the oil ran over him from head to foot.

FABLE:
BIDPAI FABLES
JATAKA TALES

CORE TEXTS:

Bidpai Fables:

"The Poor Man and the Flask of Oil"
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THE CROW AND THE PARTRIDGE

A Crow flying across a road saw a Partridge strutting along the ground. "What a beautiful gait that Partridge has!" said the Crow. "I must try to see if I can walk like him." She alighted behind the Partridge and tried for a long time to learn to strut. At last the Partridge turned around and asked the Crow what she was about. "Do not be angry with me," replied the Crow. "I have never before seen a bird who walks as beautifully as you can, and I am trying to learn to walk like you." "Foolish bird," responded the Partridge. "You are a Crow and should walk like a Crow. You would look silly if you were to strut like a Partridge." But the Crow went on trying to learn to strut, until she had finally forgotten her own gait, and she never learned that of the Partridge. Be yourself if you want to be your best.

--The preceding two stories are reprinted from Edna Johnson, Carrie E. Scott, and Evelyn R. Sickels, Anthology of Children's Literature, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. and Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1948).

THE TURTLE WHO COULDN'T STOP TALKING

A Turtle lived in a pond at the foot of a hill. Two young wild Geese, looking for food, saw the Turtle, and talked with him. The next day the Geese came again to visit the Turtle and they became very well acquainted. Soon they were great friends.

"Friend Turtle," the Geese said one day, "we have a beautiful home far away. We are going to fly back to it tomorrow. It will be a long but pleasant journey. Will you go with us?"

"How could I? I have no wings," said the Turtle.

"Oh, we will take you, if only you can keep your mouth shut, and say not a word to anybody," they said.

"I can do that," said the Turtle. "Do take me with you. I will do exactly as you wish."

So the next day the Geese brought a stick and they held the ends of it. "Now take the middle of this in your mouth, and don't say a word until we reach home," they said.

The Geese then sprang into the air, with the Turtle between them, holding fast to the stick.

The village children saw the two Geese flying along with the Turtle and cried out: "Oh, see the Turtle up in the air! Look at the Geese carrying a Turtle by a stick! Did you ever see anything more ridiculous in your life!"

The Turtle looked down and began to say, "Well, and if my friends carry me, what business is that of yours?" when he let go and fell dead at the feet of the children.

As the two Geese flew on, they heard the people say, when they came to see the poor Turtle, "That fellow could not keep his mouth shut. He had to talk, and so lost his life."

--Used by permission of Meredith Press
from Jataka Tales by Ellen C. Babbitt,
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1940 by Ellen C. Babbitt.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

This unit presents a selection of the great body of fables included in the folk literature of ancient India; the fables are treated in much the same fashion that the fourth grade unit used in dealing with Aesop's Fables. By this time, the children will be quite aware of the common forms and devices that the fable form uses to accomplish its special kind of meaning in dramatizing morals. By comparing these fables to those of the Western world, this unit serves as an excellent review of the fable genre in preparation for the culmination of the elementary program's series of fables, the sixth grade unit on The Wind in the Willows. In Oriental cultures, just as in European cultures, brief narratives employing talking beasts and inanimate objects have served forcenturies as tools for the instruction of the young in the moral and ethical precepts of a culture.

The objectives of the unit are (1) to allow students to enjoy and understand more fables, a significant part of their literary heritage; (2) to review the common characteristics of fables; (3) to present selections from the great collection of fables of another culture; (4) to investigate the striking similarity of fable forms and devices from all places and all times; and (5) to point out that in almost all fables, human actions and emotions are assigned to animals who act in such a manner as to teach a lesson.

This unit relates directly, of course, to the other elementary units on the fable. The units in the first two grades introduce the child to the common devices and patterns of the simplest fables. The third grade unit introduces stories that exhibit the use of those devices and patterns for literary purposes. The fourth grade unit on the fables of Aesop along with this unit on the fables of India present a more intensive, more analytical study of the classical fable form, while the sixth grade unit culminates the series in a study of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, where the fable operates in a humorous, satiric, allegorical interpretation of the good and the bad in modern society.

Insofar as fables usually treat of animals acting with human characteristics, this unit is related to the great number of other elementary units which consider animals from various standpoints. The unit is closely related to the units in the first three grades on Kipling's *Just So Stories*, since Kipling patterned his stories about India after the fables and folk tales included in the *Bidpai Fables* and the *Jatakas*, in which the core selections for this unit are found.

As the study of a form which characteristically uses the oblique perspectives of satire, symbolism, and allegory, the study of the fable points to many other units concerned with levels of meaning or simple symbolism (for example, the fifth grade unit on *The Door in the Wall*). Besides coordinating with a great number of other elementary units in an informal investigation of the varieties of literary form, expression, and meaning, this unit on the fable helps to form an important foundation for a number of more analytical secondary units: units which take up the satiric use of the fable (ninth and twelfth grade units on satire); units which take up more sophisticated Greek literature (seventh grade unit on the classical myth, ninth grade unit on the epic, and tenth grade unit on tragedy); and units which take up techniques for attacking secondary levels of meaning (Grade 7 units, *The Making of Stories* and *The Meaning of Stories*).

There is a close relationship between the concepts of Greek moral idealism expressed in the fables of Aesop and the entire curriculum's consideration of literature as a vehicle for expressing the corruptions of the nature of the good life and for expressing imaginatively the essential moral and ethical precepts and assumptions of our culture. What is notable about these tales from an Oriental culture is that the essential moral and ethical precepts expressed in these tales are so remarkably similar to those expressed in the Greek fables. To see just how remarkable the similarities are, examine the units on Aesop's fables and such units as the Grade 8 unit, *The Noble Man in Western Culture*, and the Grade 10 unit, *The Leader and the Group*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Origin

Of the three great collections of fables, including the Indian fables, the fables of Aesop and those of La Fontaine, the group of Indian fables represented here is probably the oldest in its folk origins if not in its written form. There are three significant titles in the Indian group: the oldest collection is called The Panchatantra, or "five books." This collection contains stories much like the fables of Aesop in form and content, along with longer, more complicated tales more like those studied in the "folk tale" units, especially like those included in the Persian collection called The Arabian Nights (sixth grade "folk tale" unit). Considered all together, the stories of The Panchatantra (according to one legend, written for the instruction of a prince) comprise a textbook on "the wise conduct of life." These fables were transported by some obscure means and emerged in medieval European civilization in an Arabic translation, called The Fables of Bidpai, by which name they are most commonly known today. The Fables of Bidpai was one of the sources used by La Fontaine for the fables he told masterfully in verse. Many of the fables credited to Aesop, too, undoubtedly had their origins in this ancient collection.

Another ancient collection of Indian fables is called the Jataka Tales. These are tales told of the Buddha reincarnated many times in the form of animals or inanimate objects such as trees, stones, etc. This collection also presents a guide for human action, since each story tells of an experience Buddha had as an animal and what he learned from the experience. Because of the legend grown up about their origin they are set about with religious as well as ethical significance, but any number of them have been revised to remove the references to the transmigration of the soul so that they are more suitable for children.

Genre

Fables had their origin in the talking beast tales which developed as a part of the folklore of most primitive cultures. In some cultures these tales turned into legends and myths, as we can see in the case of the mythology of the American Indian. But when these tales came to be used for satiric or moralistic purposes, they became fables. Only the people of Greece and the people of India made this a general practice; therefore most of the fables we know today derive either directly or indirectly from the beast tales of these two ancient cultures. The fable in the traditional sense is a short narrative which uses animals or inanimate objects (but sometimes human beings) to personify abstractions of good and evil, or of wisdom and foolishness.

It is intended to have a simple plot, and the moral is intended to be obvious--indeed, it is usually stated explicitly at the end of the fable. The personifications of the fable illustrate good or bad qualities, and the actions of the characters provide examples of wise or foolish behavior in ways that are intended to be understandable and memorable to simple minds. As we have so frequently remarked in this curriculum, the fable is more deserving of the term "children's literature" than any other form of writing in existence prior to the 18th century. There is some suggestion that the fables of the Indian collections, in contrast to those in Western civilization, were particularly aimed, not toward the very young but toward the youth, for moral and spiritual instruction.

Structure

The structure of most fables is extremely simple. They can be placed in two general categories according to their structure: (1) those that contain a single character involved in a single incident to express the moral lesson, and (2) those that exemplify the wise beast-foolish beast motif. The fourth grade unit on the fables of Aesop examines these basic plot patterns and their variations rather thoroughly. The structures of the fables in this unit conform to these basic plot patterns rather well: "The Poor Man and the Flask of Oil" fits the first group; "The Crow and the Partridge" and "The Turtle Who Couldn't Stop Talking" fit the second. As representatives of the Bidpai Fables and Jataka Tales, however, these fables are somewhat misleading since they are the very simplest kinds found in the collections: the structure of most of these Indian fables is much more complicated than that which appears in these three tales, and in most of Aesop's fables. Most of the stories are characterized by an intricate interweaving of tale within tale, and the characters conform much more to the complexities of human actions and thought, rather than simply displaying a single characteristic, as the characters in Aesop's fables tend to do. In harmony with the greater complexity of characters that is displayed, the plots of these tales also tend to have a greater complexity of movement. For the purpose of studying the similarities and differences between the fables of different cultures, however, the stories in this unit serve quite well.

Theme

Usually there is one theme and one only in a fable. It is dramatized in the story and explicitly stated at the end. By the time the students tackle this unit, they should be fairly adept at interpreting fables. In this unit the teacher might ask them to do a good deal more; she might ask the student not only to interpret but to render some literary judgment according to the evidence of analysis. The three stories in this unit offer an excellent opportunity because of the three different ways the stories handle the theme, or the "moral," of the story. In the first story, "The Poor Man and the Flask of Oil," the moral is not stated; in the second story, the moral is stated, but stated by the "narrator"; in the third story, the moral is stated in the dialogue of the story itself by one of the actors. The students should be led to make some decision as to which of the methods is preferable. They might prefer the first story or the third, giving the reason that it is a kind of insult to the intelligence of the reader to have to "add" the moral to the end, or else it is an implicit admission by the teller of the fable that the fable itself does not dramatize the moral well enough so that it is apparent to everyone. It is true that the inclusion of the moral in the story itself (as in "The Turtle Who Couldn't Stop Talking," and in Chanticleer and the Fox [Grade 3]) creates at least an illusion of unity that is pleasing. Not including the moral at all, as in "The Poor Man and the Flask of Oil," is an implicit claim that the story carries the moral so well that there is no need for a commentary on it.

Style

As we have stated, the stories included in this unit are not an unbiased sample of the Bidpai Fables and the Jataka Tales; they are not representative either of the structure or the style of the great body of stories in these two collections. These stories compare in style to the simple fables of Aesop, but most of the stories in these collections have a much more elaborate style. Most of them include long descriptive passages; they repeat a series of parallel incidents; they have stories within stories; they contain a multitude of figures of speech; etc. There is little need to discuss these matters if the students are limited to the core selections during the study of this unit; but if the children themselves do some outside reading in the larger body of tales, they will undoubtedly notice the deviations from the simple, direct style of these three selections.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. Possible discussion topics for "The Poor Man and the Flask of Oil":

1. Do you remember a fable which teaches a similar lesson? ("The Milkmaid and Her Pail")
2. How would you state the moral of this fable?
3. Has your mother or father ever said to you, "Don't count your chickens before they hatch"? What did they mean?

Give the children time to discuss this and to offer personal experiences.

II. Possible discussion topics for "The Crow and the Partridge":
  1. Have you ever heard a fable which reminds you of this? ("The Jay and the Peacocks," "The Ass and the Lion's Skin")
  2. Point out very briefly that these fables have come from a country far from that of Aesop.
  3. Discuss and compare the Bidpai Fables with those of Aesop. Bring out the idea that fables from many countries seem to have the same patterns and use the same devices. Discuss the differences as thoroughly as possible.

III. Possible discussion topics for "The Turtle Who Couldn't Stop Talking":
  1. Have you ever read a fable that reminds you of this one? ("The Dog and the Shadow," "The Fox and the Crow," Chanticleer and the Fox, among others.)
  2. Discuss the differences and the similarities between this fable and others like it.
  3. Discuss the different ways that the morals "appear" in these three stories. (See the remarks on theme in the Background Information of this packet.)

Composition Activities

Choose two other animals with similar characteristics and write a fable. (Be sure to bring out that in each fable there is a wise and a foolish character.) See the Composition section in the fourth grade unit on fables for a step-by-step procedure for the writing of a fable.

Language Explorations

I. Vocabulary

  A. List the animals in the fables. Write the human characteristics which you think they possess. (Crow--vain, foolish) (Partridge--wise, unassuming) Use Roget's Thesaurus to find exact words--antonyms and synonyms.

  B. Mimeograph (or put on the chalk board) a list of expressions from the fables and ask children to rewrite them using other words to show another way of saying the same thing. Putting the phrases into context may help.

a wealthy Merchant
was delighted
large quantity
strutting along the ground
her own gait
foot of a hill
pleasant journey
kind neighbor
beautiful gait

II. Punctuation

Make a display for the bulletin board using cartoons from funny papers with conversation in balloons. At the bottom of the picture rewrite the same conversation as a quotation. With this as a background take conversation from the fables and write it in quotations--either as a group with teacher writing on the chalk board or as an individual activity with students doing their own writing.

III. Form Classes

Put the following sentence on the board, leaving out the first word:

"Foolish bird," responded the Partridge.

Then ask the children which of the two words, foolish or foolishly, could be used in the blank. Encourage children to try both ways to hear the better form. Do enough oral class work to assure understanding.

Mimeograph a list of sentences from the fables such as the list suggested below. On the board or on a chart list two columns of words, one column of adjectives and one column of adverbs. Have pupils choose the best form for each sentence.

Some sentences which may be used:

1. The merchant was a __________ neighbor.
2. He put it away __________.
3. There is a __________ quantity of oil.
4. He brought it __________ to the ground.
5. "I have never seen a bird who walks so __________ as you can."
6. Two young __________ Geese saw the Turtle and talked with him.

7. They became very __________ acquainted.
8. See how much __________ the pond is!
9. Would you let me take you to the fine pond in the __________ woods?
10. But he was a __________ Crocodile!

Lists of words to be used (be sure to list in two columns):

careful
wild
beautiful
heavy
large
stupid
good
deep
kind
larger

heavily
stupidly
kindly
beautifully
greatly
well
deeply
carefully
wildly

Extended Activities

I. Divide the class into groups for dramatizing fables. The children may suggest fables they've read which they may wish to dramatize. Before the students begin dramatizing, suggest that they try to find out more about the cultures from which these fables have evolved. They might then understand more of the feeling behind the fables and transmit it to their presentations.

II. Have the children illustrate fables which they have written. Combine classwork into a booklet or a bulletin board display of pictures and rewritten fables.

POETRY:

John Godfrey Saxe, "The Blind Men and the Elephant"
Golden Treasury of Poetry

(This poem of wisdom and foolishness quite definitely has the flavor of a tale from the Indian collection of folk fables. Perhaps students can "discover" reasons for that "flavor.")

James Thomas Fields, "The Owl-Critic"
Golden Treasury of Poetry

(Most children will thoroughly enjoy this modern exposure of the foolishness of pomposity.)

Unit 54: Other Lands and People:

THE DOOR IN THE WALL

OTHER LANDS AND PEOPLE:
THE DOOR IN THE WALL

CORE TEXT:

Marguerite de Angeli, The Door in the Wall (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1949).

ALTERNATE TEXT:

Elizabeth Janet Gray, Adam of the Road (New York: The Viking Press, 1944).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

This unit on The Door in the Wall is a particularly important unit in the elementary series on stories of children in other lands. It serves the curriculum as the primary introduction to the use of symbolism in literature; it also attempts to investigate the characteristics of other cultures and to point out the similarity of the essential characteristics of people in widely-separated times and places. The unit also introduces the world of medieval culture to the students along with some basic concepts having to do with the history of the development of the English language.

The Door in the Wall goes along with such elementary units as the fifth grade unit on the folk tale, the fifth grade unit on The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, the sixth grade units on Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and The Wind in the Willows to help the students recognize the ways in which literature works to provide various extended levels of meaning in addition to the literal level. The Door in the Wall is especially good for this purpose because the symbolic and allegorical applications are so transparently clear, obvious even to relatively unsophisticated fifth graders if they receive the proper encouragement. These units together build directly toward secondary units that involve a more analytical study of various levels of meaning, such as the Grade 7 units, The Making of Stories and The Meaning of Stories. The unit relates to other elementary units that contain stories with medieval settings or medieval conceptions of literature: Chanticleer and the Fox (Grade 3 "fable" unit), Robin Hood (Grade 5 "adventure story" unit), and King Arthur (Grade 6 "historical fiction" unit). This unit also introduces the children to some consideration of the historical development of the English language, prefiguring the unit on Beowulf and the junior high units on the form classes and syntax. The teacher will find a good deal of information about the history of language in the other elementary and secondary units mentioned that will serve her in good stead while she is teaching this unit.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Author

Marguerite de Angeli is a good story teller, is strongly human in her treatment of the world, and has a sure knowledge of children and their likes and needs. Besides having the ability to communicate with children verbally, the author can communicate with them artistically by way of her own capably developed illustrations. Because Mrs. de Angeli is familiar with the locale about which she writes, she is able to present the narrative all the more realistically.

Genre

Stories of children in other lands, such as Hans Brinker and Heidi, about a century ago were the first books written especially for children that presented a realistic view of the world. Recently, because of the heavy emphasis in the public schools on social studies, a great many children's books have been appearing about children in other lands. Unfortunately, in their passion to present dispassionate "facts" about other cultures, many of these stories are of a subliterary quality. Such a book should contain a respectable authenticity, but it should also be judged according to its literary qualities--its development of plot, its sympathetic and accurate treatment of character, and its stylistic excellence. As authors have been more concerned with the literary qualities of stories about children in other lands, as they have tended to use more and more the proven devices of children's literature, they have produced a number of books of some real literary merit. Mrs. de Angeli has produced in The Door in the Wall such a work, a story in which the great fund of accurate historical information has been woven into the story so as to become an integral part of the action and the meaning of the book.

Although The Door in the Wall is included in this curriculum in the series of units called "Other Lands and People," it could just as easily have appeared in the series on adventure stories, or, perhaps even more accurately, in the series of units on historical fiction. In the story the reader meets other people and he finds out about life in a place and time far removed from our present day. People have problems and meet them as they do today, sometimes with rebellion and resentment, but at the same time with hope, striving, and courage.

Structure

The Door in the Wall follows a common pattern in children's stories--the journey from security to isolation and back to security again. However, in *The Door in the Wall*, the period of security at home exists very briefly for the hero. Almost immediately Robin is in partial isolation, as his father goes to fight in the Scottish Wars with King Edward III and his mother leaves to act as lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty the Queen. Following an illness which partially paralyzes him, Robin is soon in complete isolation after the serving woman whom he has insulted goes away. For many hours he is alone and helpless in the silent chapel-like room of the great thick-walled building which is his home. The story covers the child's experiences on the road back to security--which he finds not *at* home but shortly before he goes there. The future looks brighter and darker a number of times before the good work of the little hero brings its reward.

The story employs some of the other motifs and devices of children's literature. The reader looks at the story through the eyes of ten-year-old Robin de Bureford, the son of noble parentage. The distant Scottish Wars and the immediate London plague do not really concern him; his concern is with his own problems. However, as the story progresses, the child develops until there comes a time when he does realize that trouble for others affects him. To save the castle of Sir Peter de Lindsay and all therein, Robin acts with grown-up courage and determination. Within such a pattern of development, the plot conforms to the common pattern of a child's maturing through diligent training and the harsh lessons of experience. As Robin grows and matures, he discovers more and more "doors" in the wall of self-interest that surrounds him as a child who feels sorry for himself. He learns the lessons of life, and proves that he can accept the responsibility that is his lot in society. He learns well that how his life turns out depends most of all on himself. The "door in the wall" motif, which enters the story at frequent intervals, is almost as a Holy Grail to the young boy. What he *becomes* depends on what *he* does.

The action of the plot development and the thematic development coincide in the rising action until the perfectly satisfactory conclusion is reached. The King confers knighthood upon Robin because of his brave service to the Crown and Sir Lindsay, Robin is happily united with his parents, and he will soon be going home. At the feast of Christmas he has found his door in the wall.

Character

The story, for the most part, is about kind people. The mood for this is developed in the parallel incidents showing the kindness and helpfulness of the friars, of the joking and laughing children as they play, of those in Lindsay Castle, and of Robin as he learns to get along with himself. It is from the actions of a character or the descriptions of him that the reader decides what kind of person he is. After a character has been established in a story, he normally performs in keeping with the established characterization; yet, if and when his character changes, those changes are evidenced in the text.

In the story the reader follows another pattern of development--that of Robin as he changes from a weak, helpless boy to a man full of strength and courage--courage that wins him the recognition of a grateful king. When the boy Robin is ill, he gives evidence of his feeling of helplessness and lack of self-control by hitting the bowl of porridge that Dame Ellen is holding and sending its contents flying all over her. On another occasion as a poor crippled boy slaps him jokingly and calls him Brother Crookshanks, Robin becomes angry and shouts to the boy, "Keep your filthy hands off me, lout!" In these mirrored incidents it is also easy to detect Robin's feeling of class superiority--for Robin knows he is a high-born lad. On a third occasion, Robin loses his temper when he breaks the cross on which he is working, and flings the chisel in such a way that he narrowly misses Brother Matthew's head.

But Robin is a good boy, trying to act as he knows he should although he is not sure he can live up to what is expected of him. He must develop the strength of his body; he must make his arms strong. He whittles figures from wood; he learns to swim and swims even though the water becomes exceedingly cold. To escape robbers he goes hand-over-hand down a cloak ladder which is hung out a window. He runs races and plays games with other boys--and often beats them. And it pays off. The reader is ready for the final incident when, because of the strength of his arms and ability to swim (plus his courage), he is responsible for saving his friends.

Robin has a friend, John-go-in-the-Wynd, whose name fits him perfectly: the minstrel gives the impression of being always on the move. He carries Robin's letter to his father from the monastery outside London to the Scottish border. He returns in all haste with an answer which requires that Robin go to Lindsay Castle. John-go-in-the-Wynd helps lay out the plan of travel; he accompanies Robin and Brother Luke; helps save the party from robbers; and he hurries to see his mother as soon as he can. John's last flying trip is in response to Robin's announcing the danger to the castle. John says he shall go for help "straight away." And "go he did, closing the door almost before he had finished speaking." All incidents depict John-go-in-the-Wynd as an active, kind, and unselfish man.

It is in the story of Brother Luke that the reader finds the greatest number of characterizations of good. In his first appearance, Brother Luke is coming to help the sick boy, Robin. Then he shares his cell with Robin; he takes complete charge of the boy and cares for him physically as well as mentally. The friar is frank with Robin, telling the boy plainly that it is not possible to tell if he will be able to walk again. The reader finds Brother Luke busy all day caring for the sick and poor. These characterizations tend, also, to mirror the monastery and its inhabitants themselves, for the monastery is established to help others. It is in the characterization of the good friar, Brother Luke (the Physician), that the author captures the most essential quality of the medieval society that the story represents. The most important things in the medieval world fall under the influence of the word "charity." Brother Luke is the embodiment of all that is meant within the medieval concept of charity; the churchmen of medieval times (though many of them may have been corrupt) swore to devote themselves to poverty and charity. This exceedingly powerful reverence for charity, the devotion to one's fellow man, the directing of one's thoughts from oneself, was the keystone of medieval society, and it is the greatest lesson that Robin had to learn in order to find his door in the wall.

Not all the characters in this, or any other medieval story, are good, however. There are all sorts of occurrences of evil that stand in the way of the heroes, and evil persons that threaten the security of their world. The Scottish war, the plague, and Robin's illness are all evils, but it is at the time of Robin's journey to Lindsay Castle that evil persons enter the story. The friar, upon investigating the inn, doesn't like the look of the place. During the night the "evil-looking men" still mutter below. As the result of Robin's awakening, he and his friends save themselves.

At Lindsay Castle another representation of evil appears. On guard against attack by the Welsh from the west and from Sir Peter's cousin, Sir Hugh Fitzhugh, from the north, Allan-at-the-Gate comments on the aid the mist gives to their foes. There is danger; the Welsh long have wanted the castle, and with the fog to help there is a chance they may get it. The Welsh creep close to the wall, and one puts an arrow in the back of the castle guard. (At this point the young reader won't like Welshmen.)

Style

The story is most remarkable for its richness of detail. The reader can almost smell the fish that turned Robin's stomach, feel the thick fog along the Welsh border and the uneasiness in the castle before and during the attack. As Robin and John are pulled by rope up through a window in the high wall of the town, the reader scarcely breathes for fear a noise will be made or the Welsh guard will turn. The story is rich in sensory perceptions. Perhaps the author concentrates so much on appeals to the senses in the story for the same reason that The Blind Colt (Grade 3) is so rich in sensory appeals. Robin, like the blind colt, is handicapped, so that he must depend on the sharpening of his senses to tell him things that he would otherwise have known through other means: because Robin cannot get around as quickly and with such agility as he had before, he must interpret his environment frequently through the sounds he hears and the things that he "feels." The story contains frequent use of onomatopoeia and excellent figurative devices to heighten the sharpness and the detail of the descriptive passages.

For our purposes, however, the most significant element in the style of writing is the use of the older forms of the language, especially in the names and the speech of the characters. The style of the author's writing and the manner of speaking of the characters in the story are appropriate to medieval times. Each chapter begins with a stylized first letter slightly suggestive of the elaborately hand-written manuscripts of the Middle Ages.

It is through the use of dialogue that the speech of the time and--occasionally--the character of individuals are defined. In the fourteenth century the calm Brother Luke says, "Now, attend," and "Softly, softly," when in the twentieth century he would probably say, "now, pay attention," and "Take it easy." The inquiring Robin often says, "What think you?" as the present-day child says, "What do you think?"

The positions and jobs of many adults and young people are shown by their names: Geoffrey Atte-Water, who is so-called because he lives by the River Fleet and helps tend the conduit there; Richard Smaltrot, who takes short steps; Richard Crowfoot, whose feet splay out like fans; and even Robin Crookshanks, a name attached to Robin because of his crippled legs. There are countless instances in the book of the use of medieval forms of the language--both vocabulary and syntactic forms--with which children will not be familiar. Thus the unit offers an excellent opportunity to further the students' knowledge of and sensitivity to their native language.

Theme

The story concerns the development of the character of a young child of the upper class. As a son of a noble father--like other sons of noble families --Robin is to be sent away from his home to the home of another noble lord to prepare himself for knighthood. He needs to learn how to serve his liege lord, how to be courteous and gentle, and yet brave. Robin's legs are ugly and as such he despises them. As he develops, his good deeds bring about a beauty of character which overshadows the crippled limbs. As his father, Sir John, remarks, he *cannot see whether or no* the legs are misshapen.

The *good* people are honest and usually happy in spite of their troubles. The "wicked Welsh" are defeated. Good people receive their rewards. The *good* Sir Peter's castle is saved; the *good* friar is elevated to be Robin's tutor; and Robin earns knighthood.

The treatment of minor themes (such as the troubles England has with the Scottish and Welsh, the work of the monks in the monastery, the story of the plague, and the life of the lower class people)--and their intertwining with the central theme--helps develop a story of lasting worth.

The story is an especially good one with which to begin a study of the nature of symbolism in literature because the symbols are so transparent and repeated so often as to be unmistakable. The "door in the wall" motif is brought out in the story at frequent intervals; the "door" acts as a natural symbol in the story. It is used in the form of illustration and Bible verse on the page before the story begins. In trying to explain to Robin that he can always find a way out of any difficult situation and that the attainment of his desires depends on himself, Brother Luke tells Robin that if he searches far enough he will find a "door" in the wall. Robin is perplexed; he does not understand what Brother Luke "meant to say"; but he learns (as does the reader) while the story progresses and the symbol and the saying occur again and again. The thematic climax of the story occurs when Robin asks Brother Luke if he thinks his legs will ever heal; Brother Luke says that his intelligence will provide him a good life regardless, that he is lucky to have "crooked legs" instead of a "crooked spirit," and that he must do his best with what he has (p. 76). The "lesson" may seem to some adults a little "corny," and sophisticated readers may object to the direct, rather unimaginative expressing of it explicitly in a speech rather than in a more artistic "proving" of it by the action, but it is a good lesson nevertheless. And it has been and will be demonstrated in the action of the story itself; the fact that it is explicitly stated only adds to the book's value as an aid to a young student's understanding of the ways in which literature can express such meanings.

The book operates on other levels of meaning from the "moral" meaning. The pilgrimage that makes up the young life of Robin is a spiritual pilgrimage; the story presents an allegory of spiritual development as well as phsyical development or emotional maturity. The teacher need not pursue this line with the students, but she will discover all sorts of hints throughout the book. It is not by coincidence that the good friar's name is Luke, the healer. It is no accident that Robin begins making a cross rather than a bird house, or some such thing. He asks how he shall put the pieces of the cross together, and Brother Luke tells him that he shall know in good time when his work is ready for that more complex step. This is truly a recipe for the Christian life--when you have gained enough humility and wisdom, the designs of God will be revealed to you. Meanwhile, shape your life well--smooth and fine. When,in a fit of impatient rage, Robin nearly beheads Brother Matthew with his chisel and Brother Matthew admonishes him to exercise patience and care, it is no accident that Robin bursts out: "Think you I am but a carpenter's son and apprentice?" The reader is supposed to call to mind immediately--*the* carpenter's Son. There are literally hundreds of such symbols and incidents in the book which tie the plot, the moral development, and the thematic spiritual development all together. Robin learns his lessons well; "Each day, Robin grew stronger," says page twenty-one. Echoing in the back of the reader's mind should be: "And he grew in wisdom and stature." He grows, he learns, he develops, until at the end he reaches his goal--he is able to kneel before his King, he has found his door in the wall that surrounds his pride and his self-interest. The unmistakable religious allegory contained in the book was put there consciously, as it was, curiously enough, in nearly all serious works of literature produced in medieval times.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. Before the teacher begins to read the story to the children, she should tell them something about the time and the setting of the story. The children might enter into quite a lively discussion of the "Middle Ages" (the story takes place in 14th century England--contemporary with Chaucer) and what life may have been like in England at that time. Most of the students will know about England, where it is, its general relationship to the cultural heritage of the United States, etc.

II. The book may be too long to be read aloud in its entirety, but the teacher should read as much of the book as possible aloud to the children. The length of reading sessions, and consequently the amount of material covered at any one time, will vary from class to class. It would probably be advisable to conduct a discussion session following each reading session.

III. Suggested Topics for Discussion

(The following is not a complete, thorough outline for discussion of the whole text, but rather some very simple suggestions for broad topics that might serve as the center of discussion at particular points in the text.)

A. Chapter 1

1. Discuss Robin's situation in this chapter; from secure home to partial and then complete isolation. Compare the beginning of other stories with that of this story. Are the big problems usually placed immediately at the beginning? If not, when?
2. Identify and discuss structuring devices and developing motifs as far as possible.
3. "Norman French and good English words . . . were becoming the fashion." -- Here is a good opening for talk about changes in our language. How did Robin describe his mother's use of language?
4. Do you think the story is or could be true? Why?
5. Where does the story begin: location, setting?
6. How long ago was the 14th century? Discuss that 1900-1999 equals 20th century and 1800-1899 equals 19th century, etc.
7. What do you think of Robin? Discuss his social class, what kind of boy he is, his training (past and future), games he played (compare games of today), his illness.

B. Chapter 2

1. Identify and discuss structuring devices and developing motifs as far as possible
2. Discuss Robin's situation, how it has improved, his quick temper, his carvings and studies, how he could tell the monks apart although he couldn't see them.
3. Bring out the figure of Brother Luke: his quarters, what he did for Robin, his work.
4. Discuss the hospice and why people came there.
5. Talk about how and why certain people were named as they were.
6. What is the story development to this point? Robin's pleasant homelife changes, and becomes uncertain.
7. Give examples of the description in the story. Note the conversations between Brother Luke and Robin, make up others. Note especially vivid words.

C. Chapters 3 and 4

1. Identify and discuss structuring devices and developing motifs as far as possible.
2. Talk some more about how people were named.
3. Bring out the door in the wall motif.
4. Discuss such interesting notes as ". . . when we rise for the midnight office Orion is here." What does this tell about religious orders and their duties? What does it tell about their observation of the night skies? What perhaps about methods of telling time?
5. Discuss Robin's attitudes in this chapter, his feeling about his cell, his use of temper again, what he learns to do, how he accepts his nickname.

D. Chapters 5, 6 and 7

1. Structuring devices should be fairly clear now. Discuss them in some detail with the class.
2. The children might be interested in a discussion of the Punch and Judy Show and in looking up its long history.
3. The legendary "stubborn Scots" could be discussed, as well as the Lombards from Europe.
4. Continue to develop the door in the wall motif.
5. Note figures of speech such as in Chapter 6: the inn "with thatch pulled down over its eyes."

E. Chapters 8, 9 and 10

Discussion here might well center on the actions of Robin and John-go-in-the-Wynd, the arrival of Robin's parents with the King and Queen, the final scene and Robin's glory. Then discuss the central theme of the book, minor themes, the home-to-isolation-and-back pattern.

Composition Activities

I. As practice in objectifying abstraction, after the fashion of allegory in literature, some of the students might attempt very brief allegories of their own. One easy way to start students in symbolic writing is to ask them to write very brief stories with very easily identifiable characters and give the characters names of qualities rather than "ordinary" names. They might, for example, write an episode depicting a battle between a knight in shining armor and a dragon, naming the knight "Generosity" and the dragon "Selfishness." They could very easily get the notion that the battle symbolizes the quality, perhaps "within a single person," of generosity overcoming the undesirable temptation of selfishness. Some of the students will be able to manufacture rather complex stories with rather complex relationships between abstract ideas; other students will do well to understand the most basic symbolic "struggles."

II. For practice in both letter writing and in transforming language and characteristics of style from one dialect to another, ask the children to rewrite the letter in modern English that Robin wrote to his father.

Language Explorations

I. Vocabulary

Have (1) unfamiliar words or oral expressions listed on the board, and (2) provide the children with dictionaries. Divide words into syllables, place accent marks, mark vowels; determine pronunciations and meanings. Children may also suggest other words for the list. Call attention to words whose pronunciation and spelling differ markedly.

A. Chapter 1

Nones
tears of vexation
liege lord
mailed glove
"gentil" knight
Cockney speech
putrid fish
the plague
in the solar
men rode forth
friar
tethered
Dost
Thou hast
wind hole

joust
pallet
jennet
carters
grotesque carvings
fish monger
corbels
Thames (temz)
linen coif
Vespers
hosen
cobbles
keep (as a noun)
'twill

B. Chapter 2

plain songs
visiting pilgrims
Brothers' school
seasoning of wood
a pennant for the masthead

"Hounds tooth!"
soppy food
cell
breviary
hospice

minstrels
barge
seethed
gaits
bowsprit
awry
almonry
mutton
conduit
scriptorium
Chaucer
psalteries

C. Chapters 3 and 4

plague abated
scarlet cassock
white linen cotta
astonishment
lectern
cloisters
urchins
acrid smell
parchment
chisel
jerken
nought
hovel

D. Chapters 5, 6 and 7

verger
quench
pasty
hankering
bear baiting
cutpurses and roisterers
straw litter
bannock
break fast
butter cross
dungeons

E. Chapters 8, 9 and 10

flageolet
walls breached
weird
famished
dais
portcullis
yeomen
Benedicte
mace
say the office
catapulting stones
bracken
Yule log

II. History of Language

The 14th century in England was a period of tremendous linguistic turmoil. The Anglo-Saxon of the common people, the basis of modern English, was changing quite rapidly in its content and in its grammatical structure. The nature of English was being heavily influenced by the Norman French introduced into the court through the conquest of 1066 and by the Latin that was used almost unisally in the churches and in the schools. The teacher will find a good deal of information in the booklet Language Explorations for the Elementary Grades that will be useful for developing a student discussion. The students can gain a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the extent to which various languages influenced the development of English at this time by studying the etymologies of the words listed in the vocabulary study section above. The very brief etymologies presented in desk level dictionaries should be sufficient for conveying the extent of "linguistic mixing."

The depth to which the class should be asked to explore the grammatical and vocabulary changes which English underwent in the 12th-14th centuries depends, obviously, on the ability of the class. The teacher should inform herself concerning these changes by reading in one of the histories of the language by Baugh, Marckwardt, Nelson Francis, or Schlauch.

III. Syntax

A. Suggest fun with sentences. Recall the situation when the friar was talking to Robin about the trouble in London. Write on the board a sentence from the story:

"Dame Ellen told thee not, pitying thee."

Ask the children to see how many ways they can shift the words in the sentence--to say it in a different way--yet keep the same meaning. Write the new patterns on the board. They might be:

Pitying thee, Dame Ellen told thee not.
Dame Ellen, pitying thee, told thee not.

B. Discuss possible changes in another sentence:

"He obediently ate what the friar fed him."

Changes might be:

Obediently, he ate what the friar fed him.
What the friar fed him, he obediently ate.
He ate, obediently, what the friar fed him.

C. A few other sentences suitable for "transformational" exercises:

"Think you I am but a carpenter's son . . . ?"
". . . these homely sounds were heard in the garden. . ."

"Some say that the earth extendeth just so far,
then droppeth off into a vast sea."

IV. Phonology

A. Levels of stress may be marked in the following ways:

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Quaternary
/	∧	\	∨

B. Use this method of marking stress in sentences from the text, for instance:

"Will you teach me to write?" asked Robin.

"Keep your filthy hands off me, lout!" he shouted.

C. There are three or four levels of pitch in most intonation system:

1: low	3: high
2: medium	4: very high

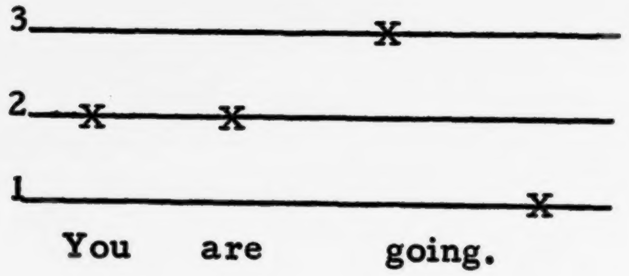
Some linguists, however, regard level 4, "very high," as a paralinguistic phenomenon and not as a regular suprasegmental feature of our language.

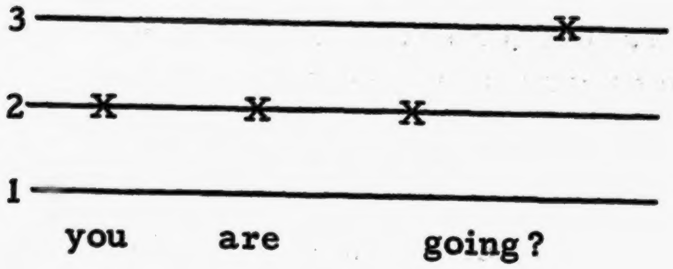
D. Continue the use of pitch levels to reinforce the rules of punctuation. After putting many sentences on the board and analyzing them, elicit from the class discussion the following generalizations:

(1) Sentences ending with periods usually end with the 2-3-1 pitch pattern.

(2) Questions which invite a "yes" or "no" answer usually (but not always) require the 2-2-3.

Examples:





(For a fuller description of the relationship between pitch contours and sentence patterns, see Kenneth L. Pike, The Intonation of American English [Ann Arbor, 1963], pp. 45-106. Pike uses a four pitch system with very high number 1, high 2, medium 3, and low 4.)

V. Morphology

Perform some analyses of the formations of words similar to the following:

	word	root	meaning
1.	"gentil"	gen	kind, origin
2.	inscribe	scribe	write
3.	scriptorium	script	write

* * *

	prefix	meaning	suffix	meaning
1.				
2.	in-	in		
3.			-orium	belonging to

Extended Activities

Since the core text for this unit is so long, there will probably be little time for extended activities, although there are very many opportunities for special, individual investigation and reports on such topics as:

Thames River
Wales
Scotland
Edward III
Monasteries
Writing in the Middle Ages

- London
  - Present size
  - London Bridge
  - Westminster
  - The Tower of London
- Chaucer
- Locating stories or pertinent information dealing with the Middle Ages

POETRY:

Leigh Hunt, "Abou Ben Adhem" *Golden Treasury of Poetry*
(This very famous poem seeks to praise the same two qualities that were necessary to Robin in his search for the "door in the wall"--humility and charity.)

William Blake, "The Little Boy Lost";
"The Little Boy Found" *Time for Poetry*
(These two companion poems depicting despair and redemption are among the very numerous poems by William Blake that issue allegorical meanings through a deceptively simple, lyrical exterior.)

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Meindert DeJong, *The Wheel on the School* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).

Kate Seredy, *The Good Master* (New York: The Viking Press, 1935).

Howard Pyle, *Otto of the Silver Hand* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888).

Christine Price, *Made in the Middle Ages* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1961).
This book, suitable for teacher or student, tells of the craftsmen who created the armor, furniture, jewelry, etc., used in medieval castels and cathedrals.

Eleanor and Herbert Farjeon, *Knights and Castles and Feudal Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1957).

HISTORICAL FICTION:
CHILDREN OF THE COVERED WAGON

CORE TEXT:

Mary Jane Carr, Children of the Covered Wagon (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1934 and 1943 (revised, 1956).

ALTERNATE TEXTS:

Caroll Hoff, Johnny Texas (Chicago: Follett, 1950). The story of the son of a German family homesteading in Texas in 1834. The theme of the story is Johnny's acceptance of America.

William O. Steele, Flaming Arrows (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1957). A dramatic story of a group of Tennessee settlers who are sheltered in a fort against raiding Indians.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

The selection for this unit, Children of the Covered Wagon, is a story of the old Oregon Trail and the dangers that accompany a wagon train heading west from Independence, Missouri. The story focuses on three children, Jerry, Jim, and Myra. Jim is the ten-year-old son of Jim Stephen, captain of the wagon train; Jerry, whose parents have died, is the seven-year-old nephew to Captain Stephen; Myra Dean is the six-year-old daughter of the wagon train's doctor. Around these three children cluster a series of events which occur at intervals along the long trail west. Thus while the train is at Fort Laramie, a Dakota, Chief Wolf's Brother , wants Myra as a wife for his son, War Eagle; while on the trail further west Jim is captured by the Blackfoot Indians and does not rejoin the train for several days. So, while the story concerns the whole wagon train, because of the author's intention the reader views the wagon train as a background for the adventures of the young characters.

The objectives of this unit are (1) to enlarge the student's awareness of the heritage of the West; (2) specifically, to show the student what emigration along one of the western trails was like, portraying the courage of these early pioneers; (3) to help the student identify with a particular period of history; and (4) to broaden the student's appreciation of historical fiction as a literary mode.

This unit is closely related to the other "historical fiction" units in the curriculum. The elementary units on Caroline and Her Kettle Named Maud (Grade 2), The Courage of Sarah Noble (Grade 3), and Little House on the Prairie (Grade 4), as well as Willa in biography (Grade 4), deal with quite similar themes and settings. In connection with the pioneer theme the Grade 8 unit, The Heritage of the Frontier would be of interest; and with the general theme, the Grade 10 unit, Sin and Loneliness. Also of interest is the Grade 9 unit, The Leader and the Group. In connection with the genre, the Grade 8 unit, The Historical Novel Hero: Johnny Tremain and Tale of Two Cities, should offer further suggestions for analysis and presentation

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Author

Mary Jane Carr was herself born in Oregon, in Portland, in 1899. As a child she had stories read to her, but she always disliked history. It wasn't until she thought of making her own stories to accompany her lessons that she came to enjoy history. Children of the Covered Wagon, written in 1934, was her first book. Since then it has been widely read, and has even been transcribed into Braille.

Genre

While historical fiction is thoroughly established today as a respectable literary form (through the efforts of Robert Graves, Thomas B. Costain, Kenneth Roberts, etc.), there is some danger when it is used as a teaching tool in schools. The primary end of historical fiction must be to entertain. The author who writes to show how life was in medieval France or Renaissance Italy or on the Oregon Trail in the 1840's before giving thought to amusing his reader is treading on dangerous ground. It is important to point out this distinction since we will go on to distinguish historical fiction as a kind of fiction that seeks to reconstruct the life and thought of some age or period of time other than our own. All of the usual components of the novel--the setting, the plot, the characterization--are set in the past, though the author has the choice of inventing just as much or as little as he wants. Real personages, actual events and places are frequently introduced into the historical novel along with the fictional variables (for instance,the Trail itself and its landmarks in Children of the Covered Wagon).

It is just this historical background, rather than the fictional aspect, which imposes certain limitations on the novelist, which establishes his excellence. The story must be historically accurate and authentic in enough details so that what is fictional is believable and digestible. If the author does his job well, the reader will feel that he is reliving the past, that the people and places are as real to him as contemporary people and places. It is vital that the author capture the spirit of the age, a feeling for the time he is writing about. If the author captures this quality of his past, he has some freedom to alter particulars. Sir Walter Scott brings together people and events which were not contemporary, but the novel has captured the reader by the time he realizes this, and no matter.

There is another criterion which is relevant to any kind of fiction, but which might be overlooked by the writer of historical fiction. This is the presentation of some central topical theme around which the work revolves--but then this theme is always a part of the problem or complication which animates the characters and events of the novel. Sometimes the historical novelist in his zeal to recapture the physical past might overlook this quality, with the result that his novel would not interest the reader, but there is no such fault in Mary Jane Carr's story.

There is one final distinction which is a relative one. A novel may be written in the historical past or may become historical. That is, the author may choose his subject from the past (e.g. Ivanhoe) or he may choose it from the present, in which case time will make it past (e.g. The Grapes of Wrath, The Caine Mutiny, For Whom the Bell Tolls). Yet there comes a time when even the latter is indistinguishable from the work consciously written in the historical past. Quite clearly, Children of the Covered Wagon is a novel that strives to reconstruct the past, the long trek across the West, with a fair representation of the dangers that were likely to be met along the way.

Character

The historical novel may have many variations from the contemporary scene, but the least likely area for any radical differences is in the characterization. Places and events will be different, but people tend to remain constant. Children in 1960 and children in 1844 will behave pretty much alike. Only when the customs of two societies are drastically different might people seem to behave differently, but that is not always an historical difference. In the historical novel directed at children the characterization is almost always one that would fit a contemporary child. The hero or heroine is usually a boy or a girl who goes through some experience which is personally significant or who might even be involved in some historically important event. And, of course, in Children of the Covered Wagon it is the trip west that is significant for all, and especially for the children who are subjected to pressure which they sometimes grasp and sometimes do not.

We must remember that we should be seeing how real children would react to these pressures. We do not want to view strange behavior which represents some special creature out on the Oregon Trail, a creature unlike any before or since. We must watch for the traits of real children, tested by their experiences on the Trail, and Mary Jane Carr shows us such honest traits. We see quite early that Jerry is a brave little boy when he tries to hide his fears and tears from Jim. And nothing he does later changes this impression. Jerry wants to be brave; it is only six-year-old Myra, who is a year younger than he, who (in Jerry's mind) can be permitted to act like a *little* child. That Jerry still *is* a little boy is brought out when he is disillusioned at learning that prairie dogs are not real dogs, and when he finds that the Rocky Mountains do not rock. Myra *is* a little girl acting her age when she talks to her doll and pretends to save her from Indians. She does not understand how her doll could get along without her cradle. The knowledge of frightening dangers is kept away from her as much as possible: she isn't told that death had hit the wagon train, nor that she is in danger of being stolen by the Dakotas. Her kindness and handling of Michael's gray donkey endear her to the reader. Jim commands respect as he protects the younger children, as he thinks quickly, as he assumes responsibilities far beyond his years, as he displays a practically adult bravery and ability to get himself away from the Indians. Michael O'Reilly is characterized by his good humor, kindness to the children, and general helpfulness. His remark "Well, I'm--a Frenchman!" made when Myra gets the stubborn donkey to move, is typical of the young man and his speech. Michael's Irish accent and inability to talk when in the presence of Laura further clarify the picture of a bashful emigrant boy.

The aristocratic Sioux Chief should also be mentioned. He is true to his tribal beliefs and laws as he first bargains for, then indirectly threatens to steal Myra. In all that takes place, in the ritualistic ceremonies and prayers, Wolf's Brother is a man who adheres strictly to his role as a Chief and leader. When he finds he is wrong, he makes amends in a like manner--in the grand yet simple style which is characteristic of him. The Indians may be seen as protecting what they believe is theirs and taking revenge as they believe they must.

Structure

In *Children of the Covered Wagon* the narrative pattern follows--with slight variation--a common motif in children's literature, that of going from the secure home to partial isolation, to complete isolation, and then back to security again. As in many folk tales an ominous bird--denoting danger--circles overhead. As the story opens, seven-year-old Jerry lies wakeful on the Oregon Trail. Although he is sleeping next to his ten-year-old cousin, Jim Stephen, Jerry is in almost complete isolation. They are on the big, dark, and strange prairie along the Platte River in Nebraska, four weeks out of Independence, Missouri, May, 1844. Jerry is overwhelmed with loneliness for the Missouri home and his loving Mammy Kay who has taken care of him since his own mother died. The howling coyotes (which are like the mysterious forest of the folk and fairy tales) and the discomforts of the trip have built up his feeling of isolation until he has difficulty holding back his sobs as he wonders, "Wasn't Missouri good enough for anyone?" A flash-back gives a brief view of the security left behind those traveling in the wagon train, pointing up the comforts and other things that the pioneers had to leave behind them, and focusing thoughts, fears, and hopes on that which is ahead. It is when Jerry leaves Mammy Kay and the old home that he goes into partial isolation; he has never been away from home before.

Six-year-old Myra, the doctor's child, also feels the isolation of the trip. (Jerry thinks she is always crying.) She goes from the safety of the Missouri home to the partial isolation of the trip. However, in her case, she is saved a number of times from going into deeper, complete isolation. Early on the trip she can't find her doll, she doesn't know where her parents are, she hasn't been called to breakfast before the wagon train is ready to move. Other adults in the wagon party come to her rescue; she finds her doll, gets breakfast, and finds her parents. Later on she is saved again from going into the complete isolation of being stolen by Chief Wolf's Brother as a future bride for his son. Members of the wagon party go through some harrowing days because of this, but apparently Myra is unaware of the great danger.

Jim Stephen, the wagon captain's son, also has left a comfortable home. His experience of partial isolation, scattered over a longer period of time, takes a different turn. Sometimes the isolation is less clearly seen than in the case of Jerry. Jim's isolation lies partly in the responsibility he assumes for the younger children, such as comforting the unhappy Jerry without letting Jerry know he realizes how the little boy feels. Jim feels his isolation when he reads a grave marker along the trail, giving notice of the death of a ten-year-old boy just a year before. A chill runs over Jim as he pulls Jerry away. Another part of Jim's partial isolation includes the worries of his father, Captain Stephen, and the responsibilities his father has placed on him--in confidence--in relation to caring for Jerry and Mrs. Stephen.

There are other shorter periods of solitude experienced by the two boys. In the most climactic of these, it is the resourceful Jim who is captured by Blackfoot Indians and enters a state of complete isolation. He keeps his fear hidden from the Indians, remembering the advice Jim Bridger gave him. Jim suffers physically from the blow that knocked him unconscious, the painful process of sawing his bonds loose with a bone bowl, and the dreadful race to escape. Besides this, Jim suffers wondering if Jerry escaped. With the help of a white hunter and trapper, Jim makes it back to the wagon train and a degree of safety.

The wagon train's arrival at Fort Vancouver gives the travelers a greater measure of safety, for they are nearing "home." It is only when springtime comes to the Willamette Valley, however, when the families have living quarters, when their few possessions are in place and the crops are in, that feelings of real happiness and contentment come to them. This is where they belong; they have home and security again.

In addition to the theme of security-isolation, the story is developed by using the repetition of similar types of episodes, a repetition which occurs for example when the party meets the Indians. The pattern followed is (1) the expected (and feared) danger, (2) the actual danger (the encounter), and (3) the resolved danger with its accompanying relief. With minor variations, the meeting with the Pawnees, Crows, Dakota Sioux, Arapahoes or Comanches (they did not know which), and the Blackfeet follow this pattern. The reader is ready for the last big episodes, namely the capture and escape of Jim and the trip on the Snake and the Columbia rivers.

Another occasion of parallelism in a dramatic scene is at the time the medicine man is praying to the Great Spirit to spare the life of Chief Wolf's Brother's son, while the pioneer doctor, Myra's father, is praying to the Eternal Father in the same cause.

There are any number of instances in which a period of comparative happiness is followed by a period of worry and danger where climax follows climax at a breathtaking rate.

Style

The story's picture of the world is, for the most part, cold-eyed and unsentimental. The world is full of hunger, hurt, and fatigue. The children may close their eyes, but reality is there--the plunge through the Mad River must be taken. Only when the party is in the beautiful Rocky Mountains does nature take on a storybook quality. Here the mountains are forts and castles; the country is asleep. The storybook quality sometimes spills over into the characterization. In a few instances, the ugliness of a character is used to suggest that he is wicked (Black Thunder), a common device of fairy tales. Again, the fine looks and aristocratic bearing of Chief Wolf's Brother suggest that he is really a good man although he does not think or love as the white man does. Though the story is unsentimental, it does present death more in terms of its tokens than in terms of its real presence.

A more particular quality of style, the use of dialects, is met with in the story. The Southern dialect of Mammy Kay is brought in several times. The Irish brogue of Michael O'Reilly accompanies the reader throughout the trip; there are numerous conversations with the different tribes of Indians, but the impression given is of Indians speaking without differentiation as to dialect. One of the great joys is the dialect of the French-Canadian trappers, an unfamiliar element in the majority of children's tales. Jim Bridger has his own way of speaking, as do the regular members of the wagon train. It is not a time for elegant speech. The few with "educated" or Eastern speech are the exception.

Mary Jane Carr uses other types of figurative language--not too often, but sparingly and effectively. The "country of rocks and bluffs was a storybook land to the children." The fantastic formations were "fortified towers and abandoned castles," and some day the "sleeping country" would awake. When they meet Jim Bridger, he speaks of his gun as "Ol' Betsy." One of the most beautiful sentences in the book concerns Jerry and Jim: "Sleep laid its quiet fingers on the tired eyelids of the boys." The author also makes frequent use of the repetition of words imitating natural sounds (onomatopoeia). As Jerry awakens in the wagon (in the very first chapter), he hears the rhythmic sounds of the wagons. Soon there are the plaintive bawls of the thirsty calves, the clear call of the bugle, the sharp firing of the sentinels' guns, as well as the ticking of a clock, and further noises of the wagons. The repetition of words expressing sound--while pleasing to the ears of the intermediate reader--also helps to impress upon him the monotony of the journey. In the narrative--with the same purposes in mind--much use is made of repetitive exclamations such as "Good-bye! Good-bye!", "The Sweetwater! The Sweetwater!", and "Hold on tight! Hold on tight!"

Theme

The central concern of the story is with the fortitude shown by the pioneers as they journey halfway across the continent, meeting such dangers as sickness and death, high mountains, flooding rivers, and an Indian attack. A minor concern is with the encounter between the pioneers and the natives and the effect of this encounter on the two cultures. The problems of the Indian people during the period of the encroachment of the white man are a subsidiary concern of the entire book. It is to illustrate this concern that the story of the proud Dakota, Wolf's Brother, with his attempt to gain possession of Myra is included--though it obviously adds to the excitement as well. One other minor theme, not explored to any degree by the author, is the wooing of Laura by the bashful Michael O'Reilly.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. A discussion of pioneers may lead up to the presentation of the book: pioneers of different kinds--in space, down in the ocean, of a long time ago.

II. The book lends itself to oral reading by the teacher with special parts being read orally by the more capable readers. The following are suggested for reading by students:

The story of the buffalo hunt, Chapter IX (p. 108), beginning with "The valley was flanked by high sandhills," and continuing to "the hunt was over for Dan."

A Chief's Pledge, Chapter XV.

Descriptive paragraphs for oral reading by the children:

About the wagon, Chapter III (p. 34)

About the guide, Captain Stephen, Chapter III (p. 41)

About the Pawnees, Chapter IV (p. 36)

III. Since the book is so long, it must necessarily be broken up into parts for oral presentation. Brief discussions might be held after each session, concerning things that have happened and what might happen next. The following sample topics cover a typical "reading unit," Chapters I-V:

A. Chapter I

1. What is weird about the "voice of the wilderness"? Why does Jerry hate it? What noises has he been used to?
2. Why do the emigrants leave their comfortable homes? What was wrong with Missouri?
3. Why is Jim comfortable sleeping in the wagon while Jerry is not?

4. Why does the author begin the story near the Platte and not in Missouri?

B. Chapter II

1. If Myra had a modern doll, would the Indians be more tempted to scalp it?
2. How does Myra get the donkey to move? Why does Michael talk about a "Magic Touch"? Does he think Myra is a leprechaun?

C. Chapter III

1. Why does the author give background information in this chapter instead of in the first?
2. How are the pioneers different from the trappers, in the eyes of the Indians?
3. Do you think Myra will have her mahogany cradle thrown out along the way?

D. Chapter IV

1. Whom do you like better--Silas Weeks or Michael O'Reilly? Why?
2. Why didn't Jim recognize the Pawnee trail immediately? Why do the Pawnees along the trail show no interest in the wagon train?
3. Do you think Jim will take care of Jerry? Will he ever let Jerry get into danger?

E. Chapter V

1. Do you believe Michael's story about catching the ghost? Why is the story both funny and chilling?
2. Why do the Pawnees choose that one moment for their strike? Does Captain Stephen do right not to fight them?
3. Should Captain Stephen try harder to appease the disgruntled pioneers?

Composition Activities

I. In order to help the children develop some sense of "tone," ask them to write two descriptions of some natural objects--a mountain range, a river, a high bluff, a forest, etc. In one description, they should attempt to make the picture as "realistic" as possible, after the fashion of the core text. The other description should be written as if it were to appear in a "fairy" story. After the children finish their descriptions, look at a number of them in class to see if the students can make any general observations about the differences. (One would expect, for example, that the description of a river in a "fairy story" would be much more likely to "personify" the river and its surroundings, to invest it with "spirits", or magic, to make it mysterious. This would not necessarily be the case, however, and it would make the exercise less valuable as an aid in the understanding of the nature of such stories if the teacher were either to suggest such differences to the students before they wrote their descriptions or to insist upon such differences if they did not appear in the descriptions.)

II. Most of the students will have done some sample diary writing previous to the study of this unit. Diaries are particularly important during the study of "pioneer stories," because modern generations have gained much of their knowledge of frontier life from diaries that were kept by pioneers. Both to help children understand the immediacy of diary writing and to understand the difference that point of view makes in writing, the class might attempt the following exercise. Write a series of diary entries, all describing the same incident on the same day, but as they might appear in the diaries of several of the major characters in Children of the Covered Wagon. Since children naturally like to experiment with dialect differences, they might even attempt to use the kind of language in each case that they think the writer would have used. This would be good practice in attempting to notice, to analyze, and to construct individual differences in characters.

III. Another very important source of historical information is in the letters that pioneers wrote to the friends and relatives that they "left behind." Since the delivery of letters was at best a most haphazard and uncertain affair, letters tended to be infrequent and consequently quite long and "newsy." Some of the children might enjoy writing letters that the main characters of the core text might have written, describing either things that happened in the book or things that they imagine could have happened. Again, to provide some practice with precision of diction and dialect in order to reveal individual character traits, the children might like to write their letters in more than one way--perhaps both as the imagined "author" would have written it and as they would write it today in their own "dialect."

Language Explorations

I. Vocabulary

Because Mary Jane Carr does attempt to provide a "realistic" picture of life on the Oregon Trail, she uses a great many words and expressions that will be generally unfamiliar to modern students. The children will enjoy locating and discussing many of those expressions. For example:

Chapters 1-5

"jintes"
"rheumatiz"
barracade
heroic
leprechaun
monkey-shines
cinctures
crafty
contagion
spell is on him
tepees on wheels
scourges of the Middle West
audacious challenge
eyes "peeled"
Bad medicine!
contagion of fear
a brewing storm

Chapters 6-9

fording
Gee! Haw!
premonition
dread
seclusion
sinews
awls
pemmican
mired quicksand
Was it mocking them?
What's done is done!
dowry chest
gore the horse
vital spot
frenzied rush
spot his kill
Indian tactics

Chapters 10-15

haven
scalawags
travois
coup
pallet
gallant quest
childish disillusionment
stoic indifference
vent their grief

Chapters 16-18

brimstone
rendezvous
Devil's Gate
Cunning as the Old Harry
Indian jargon

Chapters 19-22

"afeered"
"thar"
foolhardy
fatigue
summit of South Pass
ravens croaked

prophecy of evil
service berries
lacerated wrists
cleft of a rock
ear attuned to voices of the wild

Chapters 23-25

Ee-dah-how!
bastions
bateau

frock coat and dress hat
placid curiosity

Chapters 26-27

tide
puncheon floors

A lamb in wolf's clothing

II. Phonology-Morphology

One of the curiosities of the English language that children enjoy a great deal is the homonym--a word that sounds just like another word but has a different spelling and a different meaning. Put the following exercise on the chalkboard for the class or duplicate it for them.

1.	2.	3.	4.
heard	two	reined	way
herd	too	rained	weigh
	to		

Suddenly we $\underset{1}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ the thundering hoofs of a $\underset{1}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$
of buffalo. $\underset{2}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ of our cowboys were $\underset{2}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ far away
$\underset{2}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ hear our warnings. As the first of the $\underset{1}{\underline{\hspace{2.5cm}}}$
appeared over the hill, we $\underset{3}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ our horses to the edge of the
canyon and $\underset{3}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ a shower of rocks down on the $\underset{2}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ men
but just then they $\underset{1}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ the thunder of the $\underset{1}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$ and
galloped out of the $\underset{4}{\underline{\hspace{2cm}}}$.

List other sets of homonyms. Try writing a paragraph using some of them. Perhaps there are some in a book being read.

III. Phonology

Read the following words to the students and have them attempt to put them in columns according to their sounds: (1) initial ch sound, (2) final ch sound, (3) initial sh sound, and (4) final sh sound.

chop
inch
flash
crash
fresh
pitch
cheer

sheep
brush
shall
ranch
fish
she
wish

splash
chin
chair
shoe
cheese
should

Extended Activities:

I. Dramatizations

1. Meeting with any one group (or more) of Indians
2. Fording a dangerous river
3. Chapter XV, A Chief's Pledge

II. Artistic Interpretation

1. Make pictures, murals, collages, etc.
2. Make map of the route
3. Sing pioneer songs (or write a song).
4. Play the pioneer games mentioned.
5. Collect pictures of places mentioned.
6. Use slides, filmstrips, and films as they pertain to the story.
7. Bring in a resource person--an authority, or one whose ancestors went on the Oregon Trail.
8. Use materials children may have brought back from the Northwest as materials fit in with the story.

III. Those with time and ability can delve into the report to the class on such things as:

1. The town, Independence, Missouri.
2. The lives of any or all of the various Indian tribes encountered in the story *Children of the Covered Wagon*--where are they now and what is their life like?
3. The French-Canadian trappers of the West.

4. The Hudson Bay Company.
5. The present-day inhabitants of the Willamette Valley.

POETRY:

Jim Marshall, "The Oregon Trail: 1851"

This poem uses much "pioneer dialect" and its rhythms are imitative of movements of wagons across the prairie. One source of the poem is Miriam B. Huber, ed., Story and Verse for Children (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955).

THE PASSING OF THE BUFFALO

by

Hamlin Garland

Going, the wild things of our land.
Passing, the antelope and the buffalo.
They have gone with the sunny sweep
Of the untracked plain.
They have passed away with the untrammeled
Current of our streams.

With the falling trees they fell,
With the autumn grasses they rotted,
And their bones
Lie white on the flame-charred sod,
Mixed with the antlers of the elk.

For centuries they lay down and rose
In peace and calm content.
They were fed by the rich grass
And watered by sunny streams.
The plover called to them
Out of the shimmering air,
The hawk swooped above them,
The blackbirds sat on their backs
In the still afternoons;
In the cool mud they wallowed,
Rolling in noisy sport.

They lived through centuries of struggle--
In swarming millions--till the white man came.
The snows of winter were terrible,
The dry wind was hard to bear,
But the breath of man, the smoke
Of his gun were more fatal.

They fell by the thousands.
They melted away like smoke.
Mile by mile they retreated westward;
Year by year they moved north and south
In dust-brown clouds;
Each year they descended upon the plains
In endless floods;
Each winter they retreated to the hills of the south.
Their going was like the ocean current,
But each spring they stopped a little short--
They were like an ebbing tide.
They came at last to meager little bands
That never left the hills--
Crawling in somber files from canyon to canyon--
Now, they are gone!

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Miriam E. Mason, Young Mr. Meeker and His Exciting Journey to Oregon (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1952). Young Mr. Meeker is a month-old child when his parents set out for Oregon, yet he is actually the leader, as they stop and go as he dictates.

Enid Meadowcroft, By Wagon and Flatboat. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1938). The story of two American families making the trip from Philadelphia to Cincinnati by Conestoga wagon and flatboat.

Cornelia Meigs, The Willow Whistle (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931). This story tells how Mary Ann makes friends with the Indians in pioneer days in the Middle West.

Unit 56: Historical Fiction:

THIS DEAR-BOUGHT LAND

HISTORICAL FICTION:
THIS DEAR-BOUGHT LAND

CORE TEXT:

Jean Lee Latham, This Dear-Bought Land (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957).

ALTERNATE TEXT:

Rachel Field, Calico Bush (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931). In this book pioneers of the Eastern part of the early United States encounter dangers similar to those of the core text. Both books center on young people and their feelings in these early perilous days.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

This book is taken from one of the most exciting segments of American history--the Jamestown story. The story, both at sea (the long voyage from England and the many expeditions along the coast and up the rivers) and on land (settling the colony, visiting Powhatan, etc.), is well stocked with adventure, not invented just for the excitement, but as the fascinating historical account of the settlement and its trials. David Warren, a fifteen-year-old English boy, is the central figure of the story, the focal point for the reader, though the prominent figure in terms of the historical account and from David's own point of view is John Smith. Therefore, there are two stories: (1) the story of young David Warren with "No sign of Warren in him," scrawny, used to being coddled, challenged to be "as much of a man" as his father was; and (2) the story of the Jamestown Colony itself, its great hardships, its mismanagement, and its inspirational leader John Smith.

Because the story focuses on David, we see the second story from his perspective. For the young reader, then, the historical account must seem secondary to the development of David's own story, his quest to establish himself as one of the sea-going Warrens and to be a man in the eyes of John Smith. The student, immersed in David's story, is not bludgeoned with the historical account. Because of this point of view the author can shift the emphasis sometimes from the cruel, desperate story of the colony, soft-pedaling some (but by no means all) of the bloody details. No reader, however, would doubt that some unpleasant details were omitted concerning the hundreds of deaths, eye-witness descriptions of torture, etc.

The objectives of this unit are (1) to develop the student's appreciation of his historical heritage; (2) to accelerate the development of time concepts, especially for distinguishing periods of history; (3) to show the heroic qualities of the leader; and (4) to show the student the value of historical fiction as a literary mode.

This unit is closely related to the other units in the curriculum on historical fiction. The biography units on Washington and Cartier are quite similar in theme. Also of interest are the Grade 10 unit, *The Leader and the Group* and the Grade 8 unit, *The Historical Novel Hero: Johnny Tremain and Tale of Two Cities*, both of which should offer further suggestions for analysis and preparation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Author

The author, Jean Lee Latham, has studied mathematics, astronomy, oceanography, and seamanship. Because of her extensive research, she won the Newbery Award in 1956 for her book *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch*. She has written several biographies, as well as fiction. She is a gifted story teller who respects accuracy and authenticity.

Genre

While historical fiction is thoroughly established today as a respectable literary form (through the work of Robert Graves, Thomas B. Costain, Kenneth Roberts, etc.), there is some danger when it is used as a teaching tool in schools. The primary end of historical fiction must be to entertain. The author who writes to show how life was in medieval France or Renaissance Italy or colonial America before giving thought to amusing his reader is treading on dangerous ground. It is important to point out this distinction since we will go on to distinguish historical fiction as a kind of fiction that seeks to reconstruct the life and thought of some age or period of time other than our own. All of the usual components of the novel--the setting, the plot, the characterization--are set in the past, though the author has the choice of inventing just as much or as little as he wants. Real personages, actual events and places are frequently introduced into the historical novel along with the fictional variables (for instance, the characters John Smith and Powhatan, the history of the Jamestown colony, etc.).

It is just this historical background, rather than the fictional aspect, which imposes certain limitations on the novelist, which establishes his excellence. The story must be historically accurate and authentic in enough details so that what is fictional is believable and digestible. If the author does his job well, the reader will feel that he is reliving the past, that the people and places are as real to him as contemporary people and places. It is vital that the author capture the spirit of the age, a feeling for the time he is writing about. If the author captures this quality of his past, he has more freedom to alter particulars.

There is another criterion which is relevant to any kind of fiction, but might be overlooked by a writer of historical fiction. This is the presentation of some central topical theme around which the work revolves--but then this theme is always a part of the problem or complication which animates the characters and events of the novel. Sometimes the historical novelist in his zeal to recapture the physical past might overlook this quality, with the result that his work would be lacking in interest. This Dear-Bought Land, however, is in no danger because of the interest of the theme of David's maturing.

There is one final distinction which is a relative one. A novel may be written in the historical past or it may become historical. That is, an author may choose his subject from the past or he may choose it from the present, in which case time will make it past. Obviously, This Dear-Bought Land is a novel reconstructing an historical place and time, though the development of the character of David is one which depends more on the individual than on history.

Character

The historical novel may have many variations from the contemporary scene, but the least likely area for any radical differences is in the characterization. Places and events will differ, but people tend to remain constant. A young boy in 1960 and a young boy in 1607 will behave much alike. Only when the customs of two societies are drastically different might people seem to behave differently, but that is not always an historical difference. In the historical novel directed at children the characterization is almost always one that would fit a contemporary child. The hero or heroine is usually a boy or a girl who might be involved in some historically important event, or one who might go through some experience which is personally significant. Thus David's perseverance at Jamestown is significant for his own development. David Warren is a weak young man at the outset, but we suspect from the beginning that he will prove himself before the story is ended. The other characters of the novel are clear, with the good people lined up on one side and the bad on the other (though some do shift sides under the terrible pressures of colonization). This clear characterization will be readily accepted by the students, who tend not to see the shadings as much as they will later. John Smith is one exception, however. He is a swashbuckling, confident adventurer who is usually in trouble with the heads of the London Company, even though he is the one who saves the colony many times with his bravery and wisdom.

Structure

This Dear-Bought Land fits the basic motif of the journey from home to isolation. But the secure home in England has become a place of insecurity after death strikes from the night and kills David's father; and the isolation of Jamestown becomes the one place where David is eventually secure. (Here the motif of the miraculous establishment of a secure home is clear after the double insecurity of both England and Jamestown before the final arrival of Lord Delaware.)

The story is arranged so that excitement and suspense are built up in almost every chapter. The author often leaves the reader "up in the air" at the chapter's end. This pattern will fit the classroom very well, as it will stimulate the interest of the children hearing the book chapter by chapter. For example, at the end of chapter three, the last paragraph ends as David suddenly perceives the stealthy advance of Indians toward the shore party.

Style

The story is told in the third person, though the author limits herself to describing the action and not the thoughts of the characters. The only exception is David Warren, whose mind serves as a "filter" for the author and reader. The dialogue of the story is used to further the plot. There are no long involved conversations to bring out deeply hidden character traits. In the first part of the book there is much of the seaman's vocabulary (see Glossary, page 162) which adds flavor to the dialogue. No doubt, however, the speech in the novel is modernized, and luckily so. The story is a forthright one, mixing sensory perceptions, figurative language, and straight narration.

Theme

The main theme of the story concerns the maturation of the boy, David Warren, who ships "before the mast" in the Susan Constant bound for the Virginia Colonies for the London Company. The secondary theme, of course, is the destiny of the settlers who leave home and set sail for the new land, and the failures and successes they experience there.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. By the time they are in the fifth grade, nearly all the children will have heard of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas. Although the simple version of the story as they probably heard it may vary a good deal from the truth of the matter, a discussion of what they do know seems a logical way to enter into a discussion of the historical period with which the core text is concerned.

II. Since the book is quite long, it will take considerable planning to enable the teacher to read the entire book aloud to her class without stretching the presentation out over such a long period of time that the students lose interest in it. Consequently, the discussion periods, the language exploration activities, and the composition assignments must be used with some discretion and some limitations. Although the book will provide excellent correlation with social studies units, the discussion and activities during and following the reading of the book should concentrate as much as possible on the literary techniques of the book and the development of character in the novel.

III. Discussion

A. Chapter 1

1. What had the Warren men been doing for the last four generations?
2. Was Gran for or against David's father's plans? How do you know?
3. Why did David want to be a seaman like the rest of the Warrens?
4. What was David's father's reply when Gran asked him why he must die, too? What did he mean by the quotation from Sir Walter Raleigh?
5. David's father is killed in this first chapter. Can you think of a reason why the author planned the story this way? Remember, this book is about a real time in history, but David and his story are fictional.

B. Chapter 2

1. What kind of person do you think Red Wally was?
2. What kind of person do you think Tim was?
3. Do you think David likes Captain John Smith?
4. What was the difference in food served to the sailors

"before the mast" and the "gentlemen"? There was much difference between the common men and the gentlemen in those days in England. Do you think it is still like that? What is the reason for your answer?

5. Why did David have to keep it a secret that his name is "Warren"?
6. Why do you think they took Captain Smith prisoner?

C. Chapter 3

1. How is David trying to prove himself as much of a man as his father was?
2. Is David's opinion of Captain Smith changing? Why?
3. Why did David's old servant, Jem, look at David differently than he had previously?
4. How did David show bravery? Did it take more courage to carry food to Captain Smith, or to face up to Captain Ratcliffe? Why?
5. Why do you think Captain Smith always made David angry?

D. Chapter 4

1. Captain Smith had three rules for dealing with the Indians. Do you recall what they were? (Tell the truth, deal fairly, and be ready to fight at the drop of a hat.) Why are each of these important?
2. Why did Captain John Smith get to be on the Virginia Council even though he was still a prisoner?
3. How did Captain Smith's three rules hold up when he did meet the Indians?

E. Chapter 5

1. How did Captain Newport convince the council to vote to let Captain John Smith go free?
2. How do we know that Captain Smith is looking out for David?
3. Why do you think Captain Smith was so stern with David?
4. How did President Wingfield turn out to be a villain?

F. Chapter 6

1. When Jem died, David wanted to cry on John Smith's shoulder. How did Captain Smith treat him? Was this the kind way to do?
2. Why did he treat David that way?

G. Chapter 8

1. Why did the men from the Jamestown Colony keep looking for a river that went through the continent?
2. Why did the Spanish want the Jamestown men as their captives?
3. What tells you that David is growing up?

H. Chapter 9

1. Would you have voted to go home to England or to stay in Jamestown? Why?
2. Why do you suppose John Smith said, "Smile on the messengers (the Indians) and scare them within an inch of their lives"? Do you think a smile would scare an Indian?
3. Would you be able to describe a compass if you were an Indian and had no words in your vocabulary like "magnetic," "north," "south," "needle," "direction," etc.? Try to describe a new car as an Indian in 1607 might have done, had he been transported to this country this year. (The teacher should lead the pupils to understand that all languages are adequate, and that it is possible to borrow words from other languages, coin new words, or give new meanings to old words when a need arises.)

I. Chapter 10

1. What was David's first thought when he thought he was going to faint?
2. Indian customs are very different from the white man's. What happened to Captain John Smith when Pocahontas asked for him?

J. Chapter 11

1. Did you wonder what Pocahontas would do with Captain John Smith when she saved him? What does she now call him?
2. Why do you think Pocahontas thought white men's beards were pretty? (Indians have no whiskers.)
3. How did things in Jamestown change when a strong leader such as Captain Newport arrived?

K. Chapter 12

1. When Captain Newport and John Smith saw Powhatan, how did they each describe him? Do you think they saw him differently? Could their previous experiences with Indians have had anything to do with how they saw him?
2. What happened to prove that Powhatan had a grim sense of humor? What did he say about the cannon?
3. "When John Smith had finished translating, a guttural murmur ran through the warriors behind Powhatan." How do you think a guttural murmur would sound? Look up "guttural" in the dictionary, and then see if you can make a guttural sound. Is this sort of sound used frequently in our language?

L. Chapter 13

1. How did Captain John Smith show that he respected David?
2. What talents did David have that made him useful to the Jamestown Colony?
3. How did Captain John Smith take the news that he might die?

M. Chapter 14

1. How did Captain John Smith show that he was a true explorer when he first recovered from the effects of the sting ray?
2. How were John Smith's courage and leadership finally rewarded?
3. How did John Smith show his leadership after he was elected president?
4. How did the London Company expect the settlers to get a big ship around the falls? What did Captain Smith think of this idea?

N. Chapter 15

1. What did Powhatan mean by "seven sleeps"?
2. What did the letter mean when it said that Powhatan must be a faithful subject to James of England?
3. Why would not Powhatan kneel before the crown?
4. When did David dream about home and remember times past? It was always at Christmas time, wasn't it? Do you think this may be a way the author shows that time is passing, year by year?

O. Chapter 16

1. The hardships the settlers had to bear were very great in this chapter. What made them stay, and not give up?
2. What one kind of food sustained them more than any other? Do we still use this food today? In what ways?

P. Chapter 17

1. How did Captain Smith "outsmart" the Indians this time?
2. What did Captain Smith say had made a success of Jamestown?
3. We know that David has grown taller. In what other ways do we know that he is becoming a man?

Q. Chapter 18

1. What do you think Captain John Smith's advice to David meant: "Keep your tongue between your teeth"?
2. Do you think the charges against John Smith were fair?
3. Do you remember Captain John Smith's advice in handling the Indians earlier in the book? Why do you think Captain Ratcliffe might have been better off had he followed that advice?

R. Chapter 19

1. Can you imagine how it must be to be as hungry as they were?
2. Whowas the man who brought David food? Have you heard of him? Look up his name in an encyclopedia for more information.
3. How did David show that he was of strong character in this chapter? Did he give up?

S. Chapter 20

1. They thought that it was all over and that they must go home. How did the birds sound that night?
2. What had Captain John Smith said about this land, just before he sailed back to England? What does it mean to be "dear-bought"?
3. Had Captain John Smith recovered?

IV. Glossary

battened- fastened to the deck

before the mast - to be a member of the ordinary crew of a vessel
binnacle - a case near the steering wheel of a ship, containing the ship's compass
bow - the forepart of a vessel
capstan bars - an upright drum used in raising and lowering the anchor of a ship by means of ropes
channel - the part of a body of water where the depth is best for the passage of a ship
ebb tide - the receding tide
flagship - the ship that leads a fleet and displays the flag of the commanding officer
fo'c'sle (fok' sl) - the forecastle, or part of the vessel forward of the foremast, where the seamen eat and sleep
galley - the cooking quarters of a ship
halyard - a tackle for hoisting and lowering a sail
hold - the interior of a ship, below decks, where the cargo is stored
larboard - (starboard) the left side of a ship as one faces the bow
mainmast - the principal mast of a vessel, usually the second from the bow
man-of-war - a large, armed vessel belonging to the navy of a country
moored- secured in a particular place by an anchor
mutiny - rebellion against authority, especially of sailors or soldiers against their officers
pinnace - a small, light, schooner-rigged vessle with oars
poopdeck - a raised deck in the stern of a vessel
scupper - a hole, tube, or gutter at the side of a ship to carry off water
scurvy - a disease caused by lack of vitamin C
shallop - a small, light, open boat, with either sails or oars, or both
slops - coarse shirt and jacket worn by common sailors
sounding - the act of measuring the depth of water by using a probe
starboard - (larboard) the left side of a ship as one faces the bow
stern - the aft, or rear part of a vessel
stow - to fill, as a ship, by packing closely [Stow it! --Keep quiet!]
tarpaulin - a stout, waterproof canvas used for covering a ship's hatches
topside - on the deck of a ship
two bells - ship's time, indicating the hour 5:00, 9:00, or 1:00

weigh anchor - to raise the anchor
younker - a youth, or a lad
zenith - that point of the heavens which is directly over the observer's head

Composition Activities

I. Ask the children to recall "daydreams" that they have had, of their dreams of "glory" that they have received like those of David Warren at the opening of the book. Some of the children will be able to write stories about a sudden realization of a dream of "glory." The more observant students will be able to include in their stories the recognition that "dreams of glory" are not realized without the expenditure of a great deal of hard work and sacrifice.

II. Fifth grade boys especially will be interested in sailing ships and sea voyages. Although most of them will not have had any experience, either with sailing or with sea voyages, they will all have seen countless movies and television plays about "swashbuckling adventures." Ask some of those who are most interested (and perhaps shy of writing about "dreams" and "sissy things") to write stories about some of the adventures they could imagine happening to them on board a sailing ship.

Language Explorations

I. Diction

In the core text, especially in the earlier chapters in which David is learning about the sea, there are a great many expressions that are used by the sailors that go to make up a special language peculiar to a certain kind of people all engaged in a common occupation. As the students hear the story read to them, they could note and record these expressions. The teacher might lead the students to an understanding that this language is not "bad" or "incorrect," but that it is useful, indeed almost indispensable, for the prompt carrying out of everyday, ordinary duties. This kind of language can be called "shoptalk." Have the students see if they can think of other examples of "shoptalk" from their own experience. With a little help, the children will probably realize that almost any occupation has its own special set of terms. Consider the language of baseball players, of astronauts, of nurses, of railroad workers, etc.

II. Phonology

In order to help children become aware of the operation of stress and juncture patterns in language, of the differences that variations in patterns can cause in meaning, and even some of the possible ramifications of these patterns in systems of punctuation, try the following exercise:

A. The Indians loved rhythmic chants. These are easy to make, and a lot of fun. Do one this way. Each child says his name. For instance, Johnny Brown would say, "John' ny Brown'." He would clap his hands hard, soft, hard. (Teacher, put on board, "Johnny Brown.") Johnny Brown's chant would follow the stress and rhythm of his name (/ - /) It might go like this:

Sun' and moon'
Shine on me
Bring me light
Show my way.

B. After the students have begun to pay particular attention to stress patterns, introduce them to the differences in meaning that can occur just by varying those stress patterns in sentences. Copy each of the following sentences on the chalk board twice. Place stress marks over underlined item only to show contrast in meaning between each pair of sentences:

1. She is my French teacher.
2. She is my French teacher.
3. They live in the white house.
4. They live in the White House.
5. They are eating apples.
6. They are eating apples.

Try to think of other sentences that can show contrast in meaning in this way.

C. To dramatize further the differences in meaning that such variations can make, read the following sentence four times with stress on a different word each time. Give the underlined word stress, then determine the change in meaning of the sentence:

1. Captain Smith is coming.
2. Captain Smith is coming.
3. Captain Smith is coming.
4. Captain Smith is coming.

D. The children will wonder how to indicate these variations in meaning in writing. They will quickly note that we do not ordinarily underline words in sentences that we wish to receive strong stress, although we could. They will eventually notice that the stress patterns that they have been experimenting with also work in coincidence with pauses, or "junctures." They can easily begin to understand that written English does have a convenient method of indicating at least some kinds of juncture by performing the following exercise:

Begin three sentences with "as" (e.g., As I watched the forest, an Indian came out). Do you hear the pause, or juncture? What punctuation do you put there? How does this help us when reading orally?

Begin three sentences with "while." Do the same as above.

III. Syntax

Few of the children will fail to be moved by the simple eloquence of the portion of the letter from John Smith that concludes the book. Yet they may be surprised to learn that the "rhetoric" of that passage, at least most of its power and eloquence, derives from the use of one simple rhetorical device--parallel structure. The teacher could use that passage to great advantage to teach inductively the principle of parallel structure. (See the Grade 6 unit, The Wind in the Willows and the packet, Language Explorations for the Elementary Grades, for further suggestions for concept development.) All that one really need do is to read the passages to the children and have them note the structures as they go along. After they have begun to understand the principle of parallel structure, that it is simply a repetition of a certain kind of pattern, they should attempt to create some "eloquent" passages of their own.

Extended Activities

I. A large sailing ship with the parts labeled would make a fitting bulletin board or poster. All the information necessary can be found in the encyclopedia or dictionary.

II. A map showing the locations of England and Virginia would provide an excellent social studies correlation. Picture figures affixed to the map representing parts of the story could provide further interest.

III. Research to extend information about the Jamestown Story could be made. Note the historical accuracy Jean Latham has attained in This Dear-Bought Land.

POETRY:

(The following poem will be interesting to the children as an authentic example of a "sea chanty," or ship's song, sung by the men of the forecastle. They will notice the strong rhythm and repetitive patterns so important to such a song since it was used to help the sailors work in unison and in rhythm to accomplish certain tasks, such as raising the anchor, which required the strength of a large group of men working together. In some versions of this poem it is the captain's ingratitude which causes the death of the young cabin boy after his deed; this ingratitude can be compared to the messmates' loyalty in this version for purposes of a discussion that is not inapplicable to the treatment of Captain John Smith in the core text.)

THE GOLDEN VANITY

English Folk Song

There was a lofty ship from the north country
And the name of that ship was the Golden Vanity.
In fear she might be taken by the Turkish enemy,
She sailed upon the lonesome sea.

Then up there came a little cabin boy,
And he said to the captain, "What will you give to me,
If I swim and I swim to the Turkish enemy,
If I sink her in the Lowland Sea?"

"Your weight in silver," the captain then replied,
"And my only daughter I will give you for your bride,
If you'll swim alongside of the Turkish enemy,
And sink her in the Lowland Sea."

The boy ran to the side, and overboard sprang he,
And he swam and he swam to the Turkish enemy,
And with a special bit he bored great holes three,
And he sank her in the Lowland Sea.

Then the boy swam back to the great ship's side--
And he looked at his companions and bitterly he cried:
"O messmates, take me up, for I'm drifting with the tide
And I'm sinking in the Lowland Sea."

They pulled him to the deck, but straightway he died;
And they put him in his hammock and sewed him up inside;
And they lowered him overboard, but he drifted with the
  tide:
He's sunken in the lonesome sea.

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Unit 57: Biography:

DR. GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER, SCIENTIST

BIOGRAPHY:
DR. GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER, SCIENTIST

CORE TEXT:

Shirley Graham and George Lipscomb, Dr. George Washington Carver, Scientist (New York: Julian Messner, 1944).

ALTERNATE TEXT:

Carl Sandburg, Abe Lincoln Grows Up (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1928).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

Shirley Graham and George Lipscomb's Dr. George Washington Carver, Scientist, presents an excellent biographical study of this scientific man of genius. The book portrays sympathetically the early hardships of the boy born into slavery. And the mature figure who evolves from that boy commands our respect. The child who has read this book or had it read to him will be more aware of the world of nature that he sees daily.

The objectives of this unit are (1) to present to the students an accurate, interesting story about the life of a famous American man of science; (2) to exhibit the characteristics of a man who, because of a special interest and an unusual awareness of his daily world, played a significant role in natural science; (3) to strengthen the student's notions of biography as a type of good literature; and (4) to reintroduce the taken-for-granted world which the student accepts without a second thought.

This unit is closely related to the other units in the curriculum on biography and also, because of its particular emphasis on natural science, to the Grade 10 unit, Man's Picture of Nature and the Grade 11 unit, Themes in American Civilization. It also relates to the Grade 10 unit The Leader and the Group. It relates generally to the other elementary units on historical fiction expressing a kind of "frontier spirit" of the builders of America.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER:

Genre

Biography is perhaps the most accessible form of non-fiction that elementary school children encounter, and it is becoming increasingly popular among writers and readers of children's books. Biography is distinguished from other genres quite simply: the biography is the story of a person's life. Dr. George Washington Carver, Scientist suits the genre perfectly.

There are some basic differences between scholarly biographies written for adults and biographies written for children. Any respectable biography is accurate and authentic in its details as well as in its general pattern. Juvenile biographies are no exception, although they usually leave out a good deal of the detail that a complete biography will include, especially details which would seem to be distressful to children. But one should ask of a biography for children that it not be inaccurate or misleading in what it does present.

In this connection, the study of biography gives students an opportunity to observe ordering of data creating a composite picture of what a man is and what he does, a process akin to the logical arrangement of details to create a coherent inductive argument. For older children especially, the study of biography may teach the student something of the responsibility a writer assumes for accuracy and reliability.

Character

Since a biography usually seeks to tell the life story of an individual, the element of character is perhaps the most important single element in a biography. A biographer has the obligation to present his main character as completely and as honestly as he can, revealing his faults and his weaknesses as well as his virtues and his strengths. This type of biography is more prevalent now than before, for biographers are progressively growing away from the nineteenth century concept of biography as an idol-worshipping tale with didactive motives. The overwhelming concern of the author should always be to present his subject as accurately and as near to what he really was as is possible. It is just one more tribute to the artistry of James Boswell that in spite of its uninhibited didactive purpose his Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson remains the greatest biography ever written. It was part of Boswell's theory that a biography as a history should reveal every side of its subject completely and accurately so as to exhibit what a man ought and ought not do with his life.

One does not find a revelation of the "inner man" the primary concern in biographies written for children. Children judge a man not so much by what he is as by what he does. They do not judge him by his motives, or his psychological actions and reactions, not even by his private virtues and vices; they judge a man by his actions, and only by the virtues and vices that he exhibits in his actions. Consequently, biographies for children concentrate on revealing a man's qualities by the things that he does and by the things that he says. The author usually selects those items which reveal outstanding characteristics (if he is a responsible author, he performs his task of selection scrupulously). As a result, the characters in juvenile biographies are considerably flattened out as compared with the complexity found in scholarly biographies. The characterization of George Washington Carver fits this pattern since the authors allow him to speak and act for himself. His love for growing things, his determination, and his strength are presented not as statements about him but as observables in particular incidents. The students can judge very well for themselves what kind of a man George Washington Carver was.

Structure

One cannot distinguish definite structural motifs or patterns in the body of literature identified as "biography" since the story of a man's life is pretty much determined by the life of the man. Consequently, nearly all biographies are told in a straight chronological narrative. A true artist of the biography must achieve his dramatic and thematic effects more through the process of selection than through the process of arrangement. However, Dr. George Washington Carver, Scientist is not told in the usual chronological way. It is told with flash-backs: the man and then the boy, and then the repetition of the pattern. Yet the students should not have any problems with this juggling of the time element since it is such a familiar technique on TV. The authors can justify this juggling since a heightened suspense is the result of playing the various scenes against one another. And it may be, quite simply, an interesting variation from the usual arrangement of biography. The conscious hand of the writer is much more obvious as a shaper of his material in this method, which is usually reserved for fiction.

Style

In order to achieve a dramatic effect, most authors of biographies for children will introduce dialogue. The dialogue is for the most part invented by the author; he cannot know what actual words his hero used on any particular occasion except in very rare instances where the speech was recorded in some way. This problem leads one to make a distinction between "fictionalized biography" and "biographical fiction". When an author invents dialogue or puts thoughts into the heads of his characters in order to make the story "live," he may or may not have some actual documentary evidence to form the basis of what he invents. If the facts of a biography can be largely documented and only a few liberties have been taken with such matters as specific dialogue, the story is "fictionalized biography." If the facts of the historical character can only be documented in general and the story itself is largely the creation of the author centered around those general facts, the story is "biographical fiction." Dr. George Washington Carver, Scientist is quite clearly "fictionalized biography," much the preferable of the two. In fact, the authors use dialogue to advantage, adding variety to the novel with Farmer and Frau Carver's German, the dialect of the Southern Negroes, and Hermann Jaeger's French, but we would have to say that the essential drama of biography lies in the life of the hero; and when the author uses scholarly research as the basis for his conscientious retelling in a dramatic style, he can create a story that contributes measurably to children's literature.

Theme

A skillful biographer will not present a story simply as a chronological list of details; he will usually discover that a theme emerges from the details that make up the life of a man, and he will use that theme as a unifying element in his book. The theme that emerges from the reading of this book is the great strength of man overcoming obstacles to achieve his end, often in the face of great hardships.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

Literature Presentation

I. The following telegram was written by the President of the United States, at that time Franklin D. Roosevelt, upon the occasion of the death of a great American. The teacher might read the telegram aloud, leaving out the name of Dr. Carver if she has reason to believe that any of the students might know who he is. Have the students attempt to determine who the telegram was written about. (If there are no students, or very few students, who might know about Dr. Carver, there is little point in playing the guessing game.) The telegram is at least an introduction to the respect deserved by the life of the man who is the subject of the book that the students are about to hear.

> The world of science has lost one of its most eminent figures and the race from which he sprang an outstanding member in the passing of Dr. __________. The versatility of his genius and his achievements in diverse branches of the arts and sciences were truly amazing. All mankind are the beneficiaries of his discoveries in

the field of agricultural chemistry. The things which he achieved in the face of early handicaps will for all time afford an inspiring example to youth everywhere. I count it a great privilege to have met Dr. __________ and to have talked with him at Tuskegee on the happy occasion of my visit to the Institute which was the scene of his long and distinguished labors.

(Signed) Franklin D. Roosevelt

II. Since the book is too long to be read at one sitting, you will want to break the book into a number of manageable sections. And because these divisions will vary greatly from class to class, the story will be examined below chapter by chapter, and the pace of the class will determine just how far to go in one session.

III. Discussion

A. Chapter 1

1. Why didn't Dr. Carver tell the Red Cap who he was? Was he prompted by (a) an inferiority complex? (b) a desire to be unkind? (c) a sense of humor?
2. What is meant by "the head of a Pharaoh"?
3. What do you suppose the Hawley-Smoot bill was about? What is tariff?
4. What does a mycologist do?
5. What did Dr. Carver think about God?

B. Chapter 2

1. What was the name of the act of Congress passed in 1854 that is mentioned? (Children may know about the Kansas-Nebraska Act which repealed the Missouri Compromise. If their textbooks do not give information about this, see such references as World Book, page 560; Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, Page 20, etc.)
2. Compare the treatment of slaves by Southern slave-owners and by German immigrants. Why was this difference so important?

C. Chapter 3

Discuss any points related to this chapter which may come up. This is also a chance for any question about the first two chapters.

D. Chapter 4

Why is this chapter called "His Father's Business"? Place the following French words on the chalk board:

Le petite noire
regardez-le
Mon enfant
Le bon Dieu
C'est bien!

and ask the children if they can discover the meaning as you read. The meanings are

The little negro boy
look at him
My child
The good God
It is well

If you do not pronounce French well, get some assistance from someone who does before reading the chapter aloud. This is a good opportunity to imply that one's reading is richer if one has some knowledge of various languages.

E. Chapter 5

1. Compare your after-school activities with George's.
2. Why was it better for George to go to church alone?
3. What did George think about church, and why?
4. School and church were not very far from George's home. Why is the chapter entitled: "And He Journeyed into a Far Country"?

F. Chapter 6

Read this chapter and encourage discussion. It is also another chance for some reviewing.

G. Chapter 7

There is a time gap to be bridged at the beginning of this chapter. The next chapter returns to George's schooling. Chapter 7 discusses some uses of the peanut. This might be a good point at which to allow the children to try one of the candy recipes given in the back of the book. (A word of caution: try the recipe yourself, or with another interested teacher, before trying it in class).

H. Chapter 8

"College Degrees" introduces a breath-taking series of honors, degrees, and rewards that came to Dr. Carver. Let the children list the years and the honors, degrees, etc.

Year	Recognition	Given by Whom

(It is unnecessary to "moralize" about this incredible list.)

Final Discussion

Watch for a new attitude and humble approach to mysteries that he wanted to solve. Dr. Carver's reliance on God should be handled reverently, without offense to anyone's religion. After the book has been read, refer again to the telegram from Franklin D. Roosevelt, and use these questions:

1. What are the reasons (from this book) that caused President Roosevelt to write "The versatility of his genius and his achievements in diverse branches of the arts and sciences were truly amazing"?
2. In what way are you a "beneficiary of his discoveries"?
3. What were his "early handicaps"?
4. What was "Tuskegee"?

Composition Activities

I. Write a short story about your first days in a new school. Compare your experiences and feelings with those of George (Reference: Chpater 5).

II. Write a telegram (about as long as the one quoted) which you might have sent to Dr. Carver on one of his last birthdays if you were one of the following:

A. A Negro workman
B. A former student of his
C. The governor of his state

Each of these items might be discussed by the class. Perhaps various sections could be assigned to small groups of students (to be done in or out of class).

III. Write the first two pages of a biography of a real or fictitious person that you think might make boys and girls want to read the rest of the book.

Language Explorations

I. Morphology

"George Washington Carver's work with the peanut led to the development of a great variety of products." See how many variations can be made on several of the base words in the above sentence. For example:

A. work, worker, works, working, workman, workmen, workmanship, etc.
B. variety, varieties, variation, variable, etc.

II. Syntax

See how many variations can be made on the single sentence, "Dr. Carver found many uses for the peanut." For example:

A. For the peanut Dr. Carver found many uses.
B. The peanut was made use of in many ways by Dr. Carver.
C. Many uses were made of the peanut by Dr. Carver.

Why do we tend to fall back on the original sentence in preference to the others ?

Extended Activities

I. Put a "peanut vine" on the bulletin board, affix to it products that George Washington Carver extracted from peanuts.

A. Breakfast food
B. Ice cream (flavor)
C. Dyes (Color swatches)
D. Quinine (a pill)
E. Oleomargarine
F. Ink
G. Mucilage (glue)
H. Mock oysters

These could be pictures that nearly represent the products, or replicas that the children could improvise.

II. Paragraphs from Sandburg's Abe Lincoln Grows Up show the young Lincoln as tall, strong, wiry. He could always hold his own with a gang of workers. He had great stamina, could work long days and walk long distances. The core text for this unit contains many paragraphs about George Washington Carver that could be contrasted with descriptive paragraphs from Abe Lincoln Grows Up. Allow two or three children to go through each book and find descriptions to present to the class. Then use questions similar to these:

1. Do you think the lives of these two men would have been different if they had had each other's physical build? How?
2. Do you like to read about small men or tall, strong men best? Or does it many any difference to you?

III. A book to be compared with the one about Dr. Carver is Booker T. Washington by the same biographer, Shirley Graham. The class as a whole would probably not want to go through both books, but several boys and girls should be encouraged to report to the class after having read the book about Mr. Washington. The two men's lives touched at several points, but there were many differences which should be studied. The honors that came to Booker T. Washington might be listed and compared with those that came to Dr. Carver. The influence of each of these men upon the other would be interesting to discuss. A study of the life of the biographer, herself a Negro who has accomplished much, could be encouraged.

POETRY:

Edward Rowland Sill, "Opportunity" Golden Treasury of Poetry
(Fifth grade children may recognize in Dr. Carver's story the courage frequently required to seize upon an opportunity when it presents itself--a situation recorded quite clearly in this brief poem.)

Henry Van Dyke, "Four Things" Golden Treasury of Poetry
(Very briefly, this poem, though it may seem platitudinous to some, lists the outstanding characteristics of men like Dr. Carver.)

William Blake, "To See a World" Golden Treasury of Poems
(Although William Blake would not himself be very proud to see his name connected with Science, this lovely little part of a lyric suggests some of the possibilities Dr. Carver apparently could see in his laboratory.)

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